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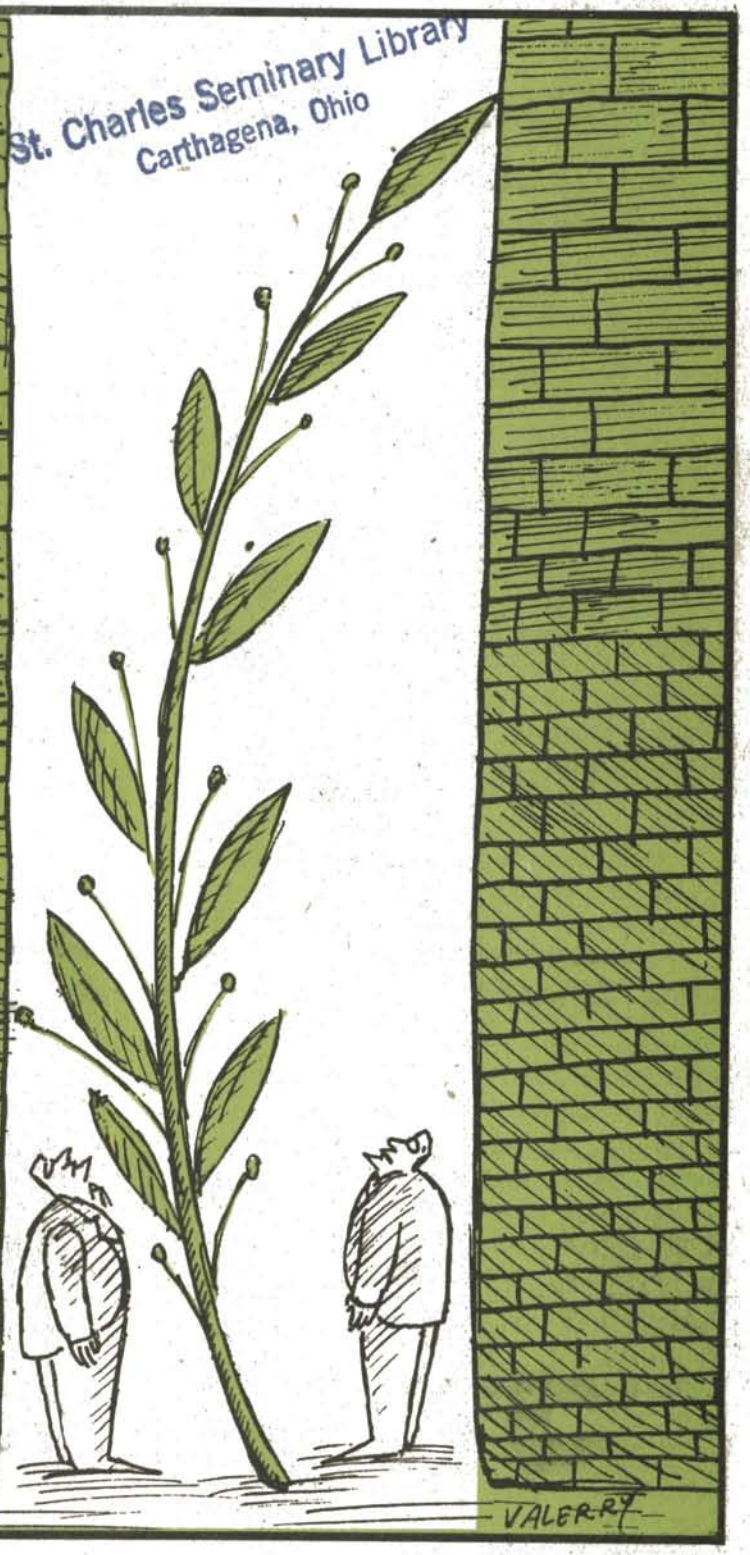

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CORRESPONDENCE

'Maintaining perspective on peace'

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Lopsided teaching

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: In your editorial ["Maintaining Perspective," January 29] you saw fit to take the *National Catholic Reporter* to task for its special issue focused on peacemaking, and published to coincide with the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

The editors argue that by neglecting to provide space for just-war theorists in this particular issue, focusing instead on the nonviolent tradition, *NCR* has failed its readership and misused its influence in the U.S. Catholic community.

But perhaps the point is that it was a special issue, published during the summit, at a time when everyone and their journalistic sisters were spilling whole bottles of ink on the arms race without ever questioning its underlying assumption: that peace can be achieved through the balance of nuclear terror. By questioning these assumptions, *NCR* acted responsibly during the hoopla surrounding the signing of the INF Agreement, filling a crucial void in the Catholic journalistic community they share with *Commonweal* and *America*.

We Catholics have endured centuries of lopsided teaching on the war and violence question, with just war being generally presented as the only viable Christian stance. We are still far from a healthy balance. For the just-war-leaning journal, *Commonweal,* which has been a party to this lopsided teaching, to begrudge *NCR* its special issue extolling nonviolence seems terribly shortsighted, serving perhaps *Commonweal's* needs, but not those of the larger church.

PATRICK G. COY

Tilting the other way

Hempstead, N.Y.

To the Editors: To quote your words in the January 29 editorial, "Maintaining Perspective": "just as a just-war teaching represents a long-standing leaning of this journal." Please count me among those of your readers who *do not* go along with your just-war "leaning."

Over the centuries, where has it gotten us? Even if you can find in the words of Christ and the Gospels any suggestion of such a theory, surely in this atomic/nuclear age there can be no "just" war. *National Catholic Reporter* has the sane philosophy.

ZOÉ L. BELTH

Only a temporary step

Omaha, Nebr.

To the Editors: I do not believe it quite fair or accurate to say, as you do in your editorial, "Maintaining Perspective" [January 29], that "the bishops in their pastoral letter on nuclear weapons . . . believed, however reluctantly, that there was a moral basis for nuclear deterrence." The famous phrase, "strictly conditioned moral acceptance," hardly gives nuclear deterrence the solidity of approval suggested by your phrase, "a moral basis."

The bishops realized that to deny this very cautious acceptance of deterrence would be effectively to counsel unilateral disarmament, a path they thought imprudent. Indeed, nuclear deterrence has never been given the blessing of the Catholic church, as examination of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the recent statement of John Paul II on the INF Treaty would verify. Such acceptance of it as has been given has always been in the context of a condemnation of the arms race, which the policy spawns, as unconscionable theft from the poor, and *only* as a temporary step on the path to nuclear disarmament.

Does *Commonweal* mean to find in just-war teaching a "moral basis" for nuclear deterrence — which depends, after all, on the clear intent to commit mass murder — more solid than what the pope and bishops have found?

To do so seems to me roughly equivalent to saying that the recent statement of the U.S.C.C. administrative board on AIDS [see editorial "Getting the Point," January 15] argues that there is a moral basis for the use of condoms. This may be an arguable point, but it is hardly what the bishops' careful wording intended.

The trouble with the Christian realism of just-war teaching is that it very easily ceases to have anything to do with Christ.

ROGER BERGMAN

Einstein's postulate

Wheaton, Ill.

To the Editors: Regarding your editorial, "Maintaining Perspective," in my opinion, those persons who are speaking of just-war theories in these days of nuclear weapons, are a perfect example of Einstein's statement: "Everything has changed except our manner of thinking and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." The late Bishop Carroll Dozier said, "We should file the just-war theory in the file drawer with the flat-earth theory." In my mind, it is impossible to accept the possession of nuclear

(Continued on page 190)

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A light in the attic

The energy crisis of the 1970s made this country take a deep look at itself. Somewhere a light went on. We realized that we were not only squandering our resources, but polluting and threatening our environment. The response was positive: a combination of individual restraint, a willingness to tailor new forms of energy provision, and a set of government guidelines and incentives. Within a decade our automobiles averaged 26 mpg rather than 16. Gasoline consumption was reduced by 20 billion gallons a year, much of it imported from abroad. The commercial aviation industry increased its fuel efficiency by half. And last year alone, we used 35 percent less oil and gas in producing the nation's GNP than we had in 1973.

Then there was conservation in the home and in the workplace. With federal tax credits as an incentive, 28 million Americans claimed conservation exemptions from 1979 to 84. By 1983 the summer peak demand for electricity was 40 percent lower than had been projected in 1973. More important, the 1978 Public Utility Regulating Policy Act (PURPA) helped inspire a host of local generating capacities that by law could sell their excess production to the larger utilities. Such independent enterprises now produce annually $5 billion worth of energy.

But we are now in the midst of a second energy crisis, more insidious than the first because it has yet to produce gas lines and summer brownouts. It came not aboard a Trojan tanker, but was spawned at home by the Reagan administration's anti-policy policy. Government support of renewable energy and efficiency projects has ended. The Solar Energy and Energy and Conservation Bank was eliminated. Conservation tax credits were excised, and the work of PURPA was stalled. Mass transit was deemphasized, stronger mileage requirements for new cars were delayed, the speed limit was allowed to rise, and U.S. energy research and development were permitted to fall to last place among the industrialized nations.

This who-cares attitude in the administration, combined with lower prices for imported oil has eroded the valuable ground gained during the nation's effort at conservation. The figures are nowhere more evident than in the turnaround in oil import figures. Whereas the U.S. imported 10 million barrels of oil a day in 1977, our all-time high, by the start of the Reagan era we had cut that figure in half. The Reagan administration quickly began to engineer a U-turn. Domestic production is down (and will remain so), while consumption is being encouraged. The Department of Energy (DOE) now predicts that the U.S. will again be importing 8 to 10 billion barrels a day by the mid-1990s. It is little wonder we have stationed twenty-five thousand members of our military in the Persian Gulf region.

While oil as a source of generating electricity declines in the U.S., our chief modes of electrical production (coal and nuclear) continue to produce serious side effects. Carbon monoxide pollution and acid rain, both produced by the burning of

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coal, are altering the earth's climate. Over 5.4 billion tons of carbon are added to the atmosphere annually, 23 percent of it from the U.S. alone. Acid rain, which kills lakes and forests, has been afforded little more than study by the Reagan White House. Nuclear energy, once thought to hold the key to America's energy future, has faltered: poor management, plant accidents, waste disposal problems, rising costs, and general public disenchantment. While the DOE is predicting a resurgence of nuclear power in the mid-1990s, other reliable analysts believe that nuclear power will produce less power in the year 2000 than it does now, both here and world-wide. After the Chernobyl accident, for example, Sweden decided to phase out all of its nuclear reactors, and to make up the shortfall by stressing efficiency and conservation.

Those, in fact, are the main ingredients of a sound national energy policy. In Japan, companies with high energy consumption have full-time energy managers. Japanese steel mills are 30-50 percent more efficient than a decade ago, which translates into a price advantage for Japanese products. Japan, highly dependent on imported fuel, spends a mere 4 percent of its GNP for energy to our 10 percent.

The Worldwatch Institute reports that more energy leaks through American windows each year than flows through the Alaskan pipeline. Proper insulation, efficient appliances, and triple-glazed windows could save energy and help forestall the need for new power plants. A consortium of power companies in the Northwest now treats efficiency and new generating capacity equally, requiring conservation where it is more cost effective. As a result, the region will be able to avoid new plant construction until 1998.

While U.S. power needs will continue to be tied to coal and nuclear production far into the next century, renewable and ecologically sustainable sources of energy are available and merit development. They include hydro and wave power, wood, solar, thermal, wind, organic plant and waste sources. With a proper balance of government credits and market incentives, these could offer flexible aggregates of affordable energy. Many of them have the added advantage of minimizing carbon monoxide pollution.

Not all solutions will be as equally easy. But two things are sure. The adequate provision of energy is the right of all. And it will be achieved only by fostering conservation and the development of those renewable forms of energy which are environmentally respectful of the whole earth.

A POSSIBLE PEACE

The world has watched, for four bloody months, while Palestinian riots in the West Bank and Gaza have been met by beatings, bullets, and broken bones. As the Palestinian death toll has mounted steadily, so has the solidarity of the Palestinian resistance—its most recent manifestion, the resignation of half of the Arabs serving as policemen in the occupied territories. Divisions among Israeli leaders are mirrored in the American Jewish community. Talk of Israel's losing its "democratic soul" is countered by reminders about Israel's obligation not to "commit suicide."

The U.S. has seized the moment to push for an international conference to negotiate a "land-for-peace" settlement. This initiative and its timetable for negotiations may be overly ambitious, given the refusal of Palestinian leaders to meet with Secretary of State George Shultz during his recent Middle East trip. Still, the U.S. efforts in the final months of a lame-duck presidency are commendable and crucial.

Loosening the Israeli-Palestinian deadlock will not be easy. Many voices, too many voices, are saying it can't be done. Before joining this chorus of doom, we suggest there are some steps that could bring the impasse to the negotiating table.

What can the United States do? Apply pressure on Israel, the Arab countries, and the PLO to negotiate for a settlement—and mean it. In the case of Israel, for example, it needs to become clear that our $3 billion annual package of aid and subsidies could be reassessed. Creative and dramatic gestures are called for. The thirty U.S. senators who publicly objected to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's lack of cooperation with the Shultz proposal may have overstepped their role in making foreign policy, but it is exactly such an out-of-the-ordinary move that may bring the contenders to see the limits of their intransigence. Congressional pressure to settle the question of Palestinian rights is in Israel's long-term interests. So is acknowledging the role the PLO can be expected to play in any regional settlement. That's why Congress ought to rescind its pre-uprising decision to close the PLO observer mission to the UN. The State Department must think about how to include the PLO in negotiations, and continue behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts toward that end (Secretary Shultz should climb aboard the diplomacy shuttle).

What can Israel do? Its political leaders must agree among themselves that continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is impossible. They must reach a consensus about an alternative form of government for the occupied territories and then secure guarantees for defensible borders. Most immediately the Israelis must devise a strategy that distinguishes between the current uprising and terrorism. The riots now raging within Israel are an eruption of frustrated nationalism. The attack by Al Fatah on an Israeli bus was a terrorist act showing the PLO's anxiety about maintaining its influence in the uprising. A consensus must be reached about what constitutes a legitimate response to the rioters. The present response has neither quelled the Palestinians, nor helped the Israeli cause. Freeze Israeli settlements in the occupied zones, while working out a plan for incremental Palestinian autonomy. Hold elections in Gaza and the West Bank to find leaders for the semi-autonomous Palestinian state. With elections, Palestinian mayors might be restored to their positions of influence within the region. Allow the return of recently deported Palestinian leaders. Israel needs negotiating partners within the Palestinian ranks. Find out who represents Palestinian aspirations by cultivating local political leadership.

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The Arab nations: Work with Arab leaders who are willing to recognize the legitimacy of and the need to co-exist with Israel and who are willing to negotiate rather than support terrorist tactics. Arab leaders can facilitate and mediate contending Palestinian and Jordanian interests. They can join the U.S. as guarantors of a "secure peace" for Israel.

Implausible scenarios? Perhaps. Incredible suggestions? Possibly. But contemplate the scenarios of escalating conflict and then reconsider the implausible and the incredible.

COLLEGES & RACISM

LESSONS FROM AMHERST

DRAGNET OR AGENDA FOR ACTION?

An ugly headline on the front page of a recent Sunday edition of the *Boston Globe* reads: "RACIAL ACTS STAIN IVORY TOWERS." The article goes on to describe racial incidents at the University of Michigan, nastiness from Dartmouth to Rutgers. Several of the most troubling and visible of these racial events have occurred on my own campus, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, an institution known for its left-leaning politics and robust activism. There was the by-now notorious "World Series Riot." of 1986 when a melee, following the defeat of the Boston Red Sox by the New York Mets, fragmented into a racial brawl on the part of a small number of students. More recently, two black males were allegedly harassed and physically attacked, and the white girlfriend of one of them verbally abused, by a group of five white males of whom four are students at the university.

The latest incident led to the occupation of a campus building by a group of approximately 100 minority students who used the occasion to protest racial violence and to put forward a list of demands that constituted what University Chancellor Joseph Duffey tagged an "agenda for action." The six-day occupation ended peacefully after the protestors and the chancellor agreed to a shopping list of reforms, including revisions in the Code of Student Conduct toughening up restrictions against and punishment of "acts of racial violence or repeated racial harassment, either verbal or physical"; creation of a monitoring committee to meet with the chancellor on a regular basis in order to evaluate "progress" on student concerns; promise of funding for cultural events and "affirmation" of New Africa House as an education and cultural center for Afro-American and "other third-world students"; a special allocation to support stipends to students in third-world organizations serving as tutors; priority in the use of New Africa House to those courses that deal with third-world issues and concerns; additional funding for various scholarship and financial aid programs; additional lobbying for state funding to support higher stipends for "some graduate students"; and opening discussions with the university food services to "broaden dining-commons menus to include ethnic foods."

Whatever the merits of this resolution of a volatile situation—and some have complained that many of the demands bear little relation to the precipitating incident—these unhappy events invite serious reflection on why such racial eruption should be occurring now, and often at places noted for the liberal orientation of their faculty, student body, and administration, as well as on what sorts of response seem both effective and appropriate. There are perils lurking everywhere, in under- and over-reacting alike, and in the modes of reaction selected as a response. One is brought up immediately against the strengths and limits of our wider political culture, a volatile mix of "live-and-let-live civility" together with "your-beliefs-are-my-business" notions of civic virtue.

In the wake of the student occupation and the negotiated settlement, what has followed at the university is not civic peace but more reported (albeit less serious) racial incidents together with a two-day "moratorium," during which professors were enjoined either to devote their classes to discussing racism, sexism, and homophobia, or to release their students to attend one of dozens of workshops or "support groups" designed to bring racism (and all the rest) to the surface, to confront it, and to begin to extirpate it. The tacit presumption underlying the workshop and support groups is that regulating behavior and achieving civility are not enough. One must go into people's minds and "reeducate" them—a favorite word— in order to root out the racism that is there *by definition*.

Everyone, in this scheme of things, is guilty and no one gets to be proven innocent—unless one is a member of the group against which collective racism, whether overt or covert, is directed. Eradicating racism turns into a group therapeutic endeavor. There is something unsettling in all of this. It seems a rather unfair burden to saddle a massive load of guilt on every eighteen-year-old who enters the university: you may not know it but you are by definition racist, sexist, and homophobic. The white males, of course, are the most guilty of all, but nobody escapes the dragnet. My hunch is that, over the long-haul, the upshot of such endeavors will not be a purified, racist-free, collective, student consciousness but a simmering backlog of resentment at being labeled as racist, even if one has never committed a racist act nor uttered a racist slur. And, of course, wide latitude to define what counts as such is lodged in the hands of those who begin with the assumption that racism is so endemic and so pervasive that swift condemnation of the perpetrators of violent acts and a wider university commitment to cultural and racial diversity, with a curriculum and staff to match, does not suffice.

The danger in overextending the notion of racism and the notion of "harm" is that the distance between a punch in the face and a murmured innuendo gets elided and seems to call for equally harsh responses—if, that is, one accepts the collective guilt thesis. One academic dean, perturbed by what he considers the overextension, hence thinning out, of what is to count

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as a serious infraction, told me: "We've managed to create free environments throughout this campus. Why not alcohol-free environments? Every single one of the documented incidents occurred after midnight and involved alcohol." Alcohol as a contributing factor is clear. Chancellor Duffey, in a memorandum, noted: "Ninety-five percent of all incidents involving abuse, assault, and harassment on this campus involve the abuse of alcohol." This suggests that prevention of such abuse would all but eliminate these incidents. Racism would not, of course, be eliminated, but a more civil environment is one within which intellectually robust ways to create racial awareness, to promote interracial contacts, and to appreciate cultural diversity would result; I have in mind authentic *education*, not defensive *reeducation* with its agit-prop connotations.

As to why now, I shall hazard a few guesses. Having been brought into the big public as well as elite private institutions, minority students face a dilemma: do they strive to integrate one-by-one or maintain their racial and ethnic distinctiveness? That this is often the issue becomes clear if one looks at the numbers: there are 700 black students at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, out of a student body of 25,000. Unsurprisingly, black students strive to maintain some sense of their particular history and identity; they seek both a positive exclusiveness as well as vehicles for inclusivity on terms that do not mean they must forgo their "blackness." It is difficult for any institution devoted to inclusivity and to judgment on individual merit to sort out group demands for space within which to shore-up their group identity. But that is precisely what the University of Massachusetts and other institutions confronted with racial troubles and minority demands must face and confront with imagination and moral sensitivity.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Jean Bethke Elshtain, teacher and author, has spent fifteen years at the University of Massachusetts and twenty-two years in the Northeast. She will soon take up her new post as Centennial Professor of Political Science, Vanderbilt University. Her most recent book is Women and War *(Basic Books).*

HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST GERMANY

'GLASNOST' MEETS THE WALL

THE LONG WAY TO REFORM

The East German government has launched an undeclared war on opposition activity and, perhaps, on Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*. On January 25, investigations for treason began against leading independent activists in East Berlin — Barbel Bohley, Werner Fischer, Ralph Hirsch, Freya Klier, Stephan Krawczyk, and Wolfgang and Regina Templin — people whose "crime" involved monitoring human rights conditions and trying to promote world peace. By arresting them on a charge as serious as treason, the East German government openly defied the trend toward liberalization in the Soviet Union — a trend that could alter irrevocably the East German regime's control over society. Faced with the threat of long-term imprisonment or departure to the West, the activists were all forced to leave their country by early February. It remains to be seen, however, whether they will be permitted to return to East Germany and whether opposition will continue — or even flourish —in the wake of their expulsions.

That East Germany resorted to charging these people with treason and subsequently expelling them attests to the recent effectiveness of independent activity and to the discomfort that the authorities in the region feel with the changes blowing in from Moscow. The relatively small group known as activists, most associated with the Peace and Human Rights Initiative (Freya Klier is a dissident theater producer; Krawczyk, her husband, is a singer/songwriter who has been banned from performing in East Germany), has worked to bring these issues, in addition to environmental protection, to the attention of the East German public. Despite constant harassment the movement has persevered.

The East German government has changed its tactics on dealing with opposition activity. Until two months ago, the government was intent on not creating martyrs, or *causes célèbres*, by imprisoning human rights activists. Instead, the government relied on financial and personal harassment to deter independent activists: they would lose their jobs, their children would be harassed, threats would come in the mail; they were subject to short-term detentions, house searches, periods of house arrest, and obvious surveillance. All this has taken a heavy toll, and has led many activists to seek emigration to West Germany.

The strength of the movement, and the turning point in the government's tactics, was clearly demonstrated in late November 1987, after a crackdown on an "environmental library" in the basement of an East Berlin church. The environmental library was used as a meeting place for unofficial peace, environmental, and human rights work, and two *samizdat* journals, *Environmental Page* and *Grenzfall*, were produced there. *Grenzfall*, which first appeared in June 1986, is produced by the Peace and Human Rights Initiative and is intended to be a monthly bulletin on peace, ecology, human rights, and independent activities in East Germany. The appearance of *Grenzfall*, which is independent of both the state and church, was a significant development in the growth of independent activity in East Germany. There is reason to believe that the raid on the environmental library was directed at *Grenzfall* and the Peace and Human Rights Initiative.

On November 26, security police raided the church premises — the first time in decades that security police searched a church — and the action sparked significant protests in several East German cities: some activists were detained for protesting the raid, and hundreds participated in vigils on behalf of those being held. The outcry from the Protestant church and from the

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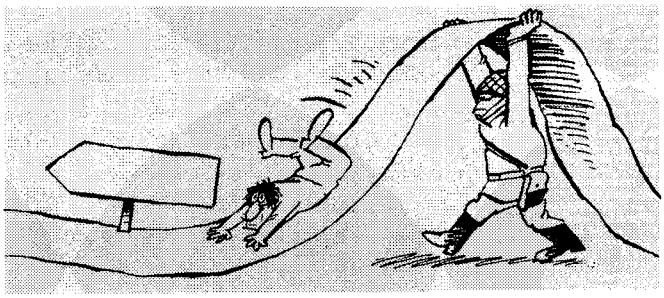

international community helped to force the authorities to back down; all the detainees were released and the materials that had been confiscated were supposed to be returned. This victory inspired understandable euphoria among independent activists in East Germany. The government, uncharacteristically humbled, even agreed to begin a dialogue with church officials over the future of the environmental library.

And yet, a mere two months later, the government took its revenge. During an official march on January 17 commemorating the murders sixty-nine years ago of the German Communist revolutionaries Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, some 120 unofficial demonstrators who tried to participate were rounded up by police. Others —including Krawczyk and the members of the Peace and Human Rights Initiative — never made it to the demonstration, but were arrested en route or placed under house arrest.

Perhaps realizing that they had stumbled on an occasion to rid themselves once and for all of the troublesome dissidents, the authorities proceeded to expel more than fifty detainees to West Germany, and arrested most of the leading human rights activists. Though the seven activists charged with treason had stated repeatedly that they did not want to leave their country, the East German government left them with little choice: if they refused to leave, they would be imprisoned for treason. By the end of the first week of February, Klier, Krawczyk, and Hirsch were forced to sign emigration papers and leave for West Germany; the Templins were given two-year passports; Bohley and Fischer were given six-month passports.

Those who received passports theoretically should be permitted to return to East Germany, and Bohley and Fischer intend to do so on August 6. That date will be a crucial test for the East German government to see whether it can be taken at its word. Based on past experience, the East German authorities are not necessarily to be trusted; there have been instances when the government revoked the citizenship of individuals carrying temporary passports, notably the case of the activist songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976.

As developments evolve over the next few months, two factors could be decisive: the reaction of the Protestant church hierarchy and the impact of international attention. Given the stature of the Protestant church in East Germany, and its traditional reluctance to take on the government, a strong stand in defense of human rights activism could force the government to ease its restrictions of independent activity and permit the activists to return, just as church pressure undoubtedly contributed to the government's retreat after the November raid. The fact that thousands of East Germans have attended "intercession services" which were addressed by high-ranking church officials on behalf of the detained activists indicates that the church may be willing to play this role.

If the church's stand is combined with strong international pressure, emanating from proponents of *glasnost* in the East as well as from human rights advocates in the West, the East German government would be faced with a potentially untenable situation. Even more untenable, however, would be the situation the government would face if it attempts to squash the groundswell of support for independent activity that has emerged in East Germany. By attempting to eliminate the peace and human rights community, the government may have fueled the determination of others to continue their work. This surge of activism could enhance immeasurably the chances for reform in East Germany. JANET FLEISCHMAN

Janet Fleischman is program coordinator of Helsinki Watch, a New York-based human rights organization.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

PILGRIMS OF THE ABSOLUTE

THE SEARCH THAT NEVER ENDS

Julius Lester, the author of a number of books (including the excellent *To Be a Slave*, a Newberry award winner which really should be required reading before any American child is graduated from high school), converted to Judaism in 1983. In *Lovesong: Becoming a Jew* (Henry Holt and Company, $19.95, 248 pp.) he recounts what took him from a childhood in the Methodist church which his father served as a minister, along a path which included activism during the most crucial years of the civil rights movement, a controversy in which he was identified by many as a prime example of black anti-Semitism, a careful and difficult spiritual search, and finally this choice to become part of the people who were, it turns out, his own on his mother's side: Julius Lester's great-grandfather was a German Jew who married a former slave. *Lovesong* is too uneven to be considered Lester's best book; the experience of his conversion may still be too fresh, or perhaps it is because the book is put together loosely in a form which resembles entries in a journal and uses some already published material. But *Lovesong* contains, I think, some of his best

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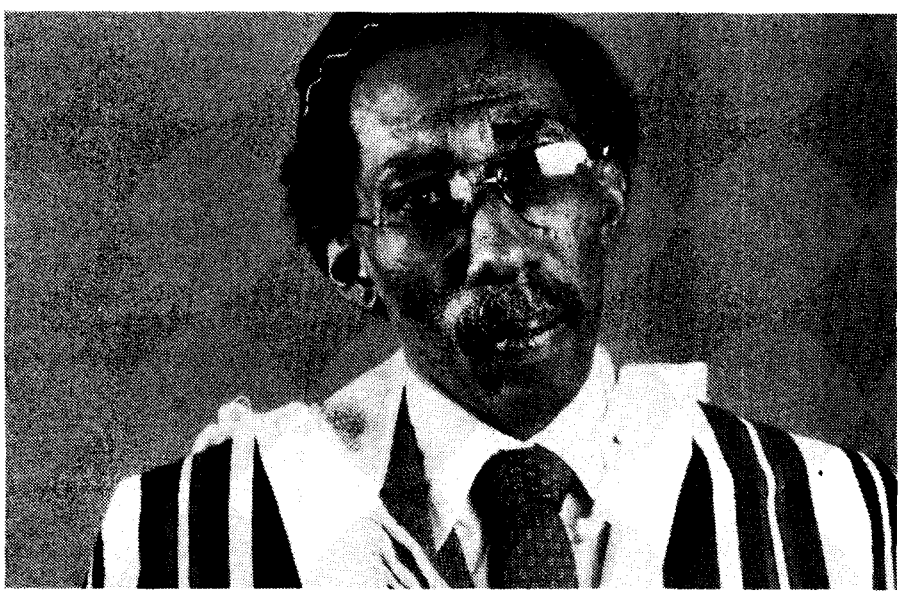
and most moving writing. It is important not only for what it says about a unique American writer and his personal journey, fascinating as that journey is, but also for what it says about some deeper currents in our common life.

I first came across Lester's writing in the radical magazine *Liberation*, where he had a regular column. The first of his many books, *Look Out Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Momma!* had a funny title at a time when humor in the civil rights movement was rare (and the humor was missed by a lot of white critics: Lester quotes a newspaper which ran the headline, "WHITE MAMAS IN DANGER, SAYS BLACK MILITANT, SNCC LESTER"). His *Liberation* column took on



not only the targets favored by radicals during the sixties, but the movement itself, when it failed in honesty or compromised itself morally. He made ideologues on the left nervous.

Over the years new books appeared, and there were controversies. As host of a radio program during the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy in 1968, Lester allowed the reading of an anti-Semitic poem that brought about a most understandable wave of protest and did little to clarify a situation which already suffered from having Albert Shanker at its center. It was not Lester's finest hour. Eleven years later Lester wrote an essay for the *Village Voice* criticizing the insensitivity of black leaders to Jewish suffering, particularly their refusal to condemn Palestinian terrorism while actively endorsing the Palestinian cause.

He has not been afraid to make enemies, obviously, and according to this book (and to a recent report on National Public Radio) his movement towards Judaism and his unwillingness to follow a "party line" have alienated him from some of his colleagues at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

These controversies are dealt with in *Lovesong*, but are seen in a larger perspective: the book is intensely personal, and for the most part places the politics of the civil rights movement and later controversies in the context of a life-long spiritual search. At the age of eight or nine, while practicing piano, he finds a piano score so moving that he returns to it again and again; it is "Kol Nidre," the song sung on the eve of the Day of Atonement. When he was a child Lester told his mother that he wanted to be a monk. She told him monks don't *do* anything, but he understood then that there was something more important in life than doing. Later he finds the books of Thomas Merton an important guide, and spends some time at the Abbey of Gethsemane. He understands that the most important questions cannot be dealt with politically, or even at a clearly conscious level. They involve depths which frequently we do not now understand, and they bring us to the discovery of the holy, which can bring us not only to awe and joy, but to fear. On one occasion Lester finds himself compelled to attend a daily service at an Orthodox *shul*.

> I am going because I am afraid. . . . The fear is existential, because I do not understand myself. I do not understand how I have lived, and how I have arrived at this place of so radically changing not only how I live but how I conceive of myself. The only answer I can offer is that I am following my soul, but what does that mean? What the hell is the soul, anyhow? How do I know that I am hearing it and not some neurosis or complex? Is the language of the soul that swelling exaltation of tears and laughter? Is it the warmth of gratitude to God that I am blood and bone and flesh and anxiety and arrogance and sentimentality and exuberance and coldness and cruelty? Is it a silence as deep and eternal and incomprehensible as death? I don't know. I am only doing what I must do, not knowing what it is I am doing.

There is a willingness here which strikes me as religious obedience in the most radical sense.

There is more to this book. Lester writes about his family—at both ends, his parents as well as his children—with care and sensitivity, and the passages concerning his father's death are particularly good. What he has to say about being a father, about being a son, and about parenthood is wonderful. There are also moments of humor. The passage quoted above leads almost immediately to a description of the worship service, during which Lester is distracted because he is half-involved in a conversation he could not have expected: as some people pray in Hebrew, two men in back argue over a baseball game.

There are risks in writing as personally as Lester does here; any criticism of the book will seem a criticism of Lester's life itself. A book of this sort must, however, take the risk of being this personal if it is to be helpful to others. Its risks and occasionally murky areas are not unlike life, and where you wish things were more clearly known, more fully realized, or

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where you wish the author had not acted as he did, you realize this is not a novel but the messy business of getting through a life as honestly as it can be done.

As a Christian I am sorry Lester moved away from Christianity; he does not respond to what he sees as the Christian doctrine of atonement: "Why should I give my sins to Jesus? They were my sins. It was my task to mediate them. To give one's sins to Jesus felt like the effort to preserve innocence." This may be a common understanding of Jesus, and it is easy to appreciate why it does not appeal to someone who has emphasized personal responsibility throughout his writing life. This hardly exhausts the Christian understanding of Christ, and Lester makes no mention of the Jesus who is the Father's Word, the *Logos*, the meaning of the universe. However, I should make it clear that this book is far from an argument with Christianity or a polemic of any sort. As he presents it here there is no doubt of the integrity of Lester's journey, or its honesty, or its cost. It is plainly something that has not yet ended for him, and I look forward to whatever he gives us next.

I read *Lovesong* just a couple of days after reading a column by Mark Jacobson in the March issue of *Esquire*. Jacobson, who thought at one point that his religious training had killed Judaism forever for him, finds himself looking at his daughter and realizing that he wants her to understand spirituality.

> . . . like any well-intentioned dad, I seek to protect my children from what I consider to be detrimental. That's why, with increasing urgency, I'm turning to religion. For, if a mythic value system is going to be involuntarily absorbed by a kid of mine, I'd rather it be a 2,500-year-old mythos, the product of the constant working and reworking of the most creative minds of a society, than a tinny narrative worked up during a twenty-minute meeting in a sleek-lined NBC story-conference room. My kids are too good to have their imaginations press-stamped on a cultural assembly line; I'd rather have them lost in a cloud of unknowing than wondering who shot J.R.

Jacobson says that he feels "under the gun in this moronic social climate" and that friends from a lot of religious backgrounds are beginning to doubt their adolescent doubts; they are beginning to think about religion seriously, because of their children. "For me . . . is the crazy thought that it might be possible that one of my children has a special talent for accepting God, knowing him, loving him . . . some people are possessed of a hugeness of spirit that enables them to embrace the universe with vastness of faith." So Jacobson has been, as he puts it, "shopping" for a religion with his daughter. They have been to a Catholic church in Little Italy, and to a synagogue on the Lower East Side. He will support what she is drawn to, Jacobson says. "It's something parents should do. What a weird way it would be, to return to the fold."

Not so weird, I think. I know a lot of people whose adult religious lives have begun with marriage and the questions which surround children and what you give them. The faith may not be the faith of their own fathers and mothers, and the quest for meaning can lead down some funny paths, like trance-channeling or witchcraft or fundamentalism. Nevertheless, this is a response to a void which is at the heart of our culture. In previous ages religion was too often a sign of respectability or something accepted because one's parents accepted it. Religion has been freed from that, and if the danger here is that it can be seen as a form of therapy, a consolation, it is also free to be about life's meaning, something which it cannot be—or anyway cannot be clearly or cleanly—in a theocracy or in a society which regards religion as a respectable thing. This is one of secularism's gifts to religion. The concern Jacobson shows for his children is (thank God) not unique. It does not yet appear to have the depth or longevity of Lester's search, but it is not far from that search either. Both indicate a direction which gives real reason for hope □

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

TAKING ON THE SUPER-RIVALS

REACTIONS TO THE POPE'S LATEST ENCYCLICAL

John Paul II's latest encyclical, *The Social Concern of the Church*, has raised hopes and hackles. The latter are much in evidence on American op-ed pages, prominently voiced by William Safire, William Buckley, and—more gently—by Michael Novak. The tone of Mr. Safire's response can't be excused but its complaints should be dismissed; they add little to a serious discussion of the document. Similarly, one hopes that not too much of the post-encyclical discussion will be focused on Mr. Buckley's idiosyncratic view that the papacy should provide the ideological defense for the Western economic system. Somehow it just doesn't seem appropriate to reduce the papal teaching to a public relations effort for the NATO countries. Mr. Novak is a different story; as a persistent and provocative student of Catholic theology, his voice will and should be heard as part of the sorting out of the encyclical's several themes.

The hopes raised by the encyclical derive from its scope and substance. It is a broad-based assessment of the interna-

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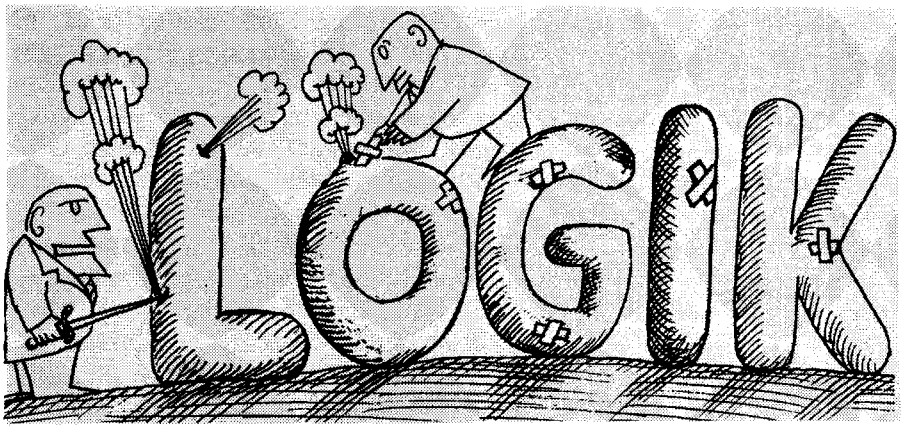

tional horizon from a pope whom George Will has described as "the most fascinating figure on the world stage today...." The scope of the letter guarantees a vigorous debate; indeed its primary value may be the arguments which it will initiate in the secular disciplines of politics and economics and in the normative disciplines of theology and ethics. Three examples of the encyclical's catalytic potential can be adduced.

First, the framework of analysis which pervades the letter: the occasion for *The Social Concern of the Church* is the twentieth anniversary of Paul VI's encyclical, *The Development of Peoples*. John Paul II sets out to assess the state of development two decades later and finds that "the hopes for development . . . today appear very far from being realized." There are several reasons for this condition, but the one to which the pope returns continually in the letter is the effect of the "East-West" political and ideological competition on the "North-South" problem: "The tension between the two blocs which began at the end of the Second World War has dominated the whole of the subsequent forty years. . . . Seen in this way the present division of the world is a *direct obstacle* to the real transformation of the conditions of underdevelopment in the developing and less advanced countries."

This method of joining the East-West analysis to the North-South dimensions of world politics has been a prominent idea in John Paul's teaching. While he draws heavily upon Paul VI's earlier letter, this analytical approach goes significantly beyond *The Development of Peoples*. It is precisely this equation of East and West as bearing joint moral responsibility for the slow progress of development in the Southern Hemisphere which has drawn the fire of Messrs. Safire and Buckley. In the language of the U.S. policy debate they find the pope a fellow-traveler with the heresy of "moral equivalence," i.e., the notion that the superpowers share similar responsibility for the arms race, the injection of superpower rivalry into regional disputes, and the failure to respond to the human needs of the poor of the world. The moral equivalence charge is the language of the American political right; trying to tie the label to someone of John Paul II's life experience and documented record on human rights is an unenviable task. Not one of the authors cited above seems up to it.

A more interesting and more serious effort would be to press the papal linkage of East-West and North-South issues to a more detailed level of specificity. In the last decade, U.S. policy has been cast in two extreme modes, neither of which is politically or morally adequate to the reality of international life today. In 1977 President Carter argued that the East-West perspective was anachronistic and the new agenda of world politics would be the interdependence issues of North and South. The truth contained in the statement was overwhelmed by its absolute and unidimensional character. Pressing for more attention to the problems of the South was altogether in order, but ignoring the centrality of the U.S.-Soviet competition left Mr. Carter open to devastating criticism. The counterpoint to the Carter extreme has been the equally unidimensional East-West grid imposed an all issues in the Reagan era.

It is simpler to cite the errors in formulation than to strike a balanced analysis of these two dimensions of world politics. The value of the papal critique of the superpower role is that it is also an invitation to scholars and politicians to weigh the distinct elements in each set of issues and to probe the intersection of East-West and North-South anew.

The content of the moral analysis in the new encyclical will be an invitation to theologians and others with particular interest in Catholic social teaching. As he has done before, John Paul II has combined the philosophical resources of Catholic teaching with a more explicit biblical-theological reflection than one finds in classical social thought (including *The Development of Peoples*). There is in this philosophical-theological mix the potential for movement on several fronts. Students of the social teaching will find the discussion of "structures of sin" and their relationship to personal sin a starting point for further analysis. The extensive use of the category of interdependence and its relationship to an ethic of solidarity is a step beyond *The Development of Peoples*. The pope's discussion of the "right of initiative" will enrich both the teaching on private property and on subsidiarity.

Finally, those who would contain the church's social teaching to general principles alone will find this letter troublesome. It is filled with concrete policy discussions. Most, but not all, of the issues flow from the pope's assessment of the impact of the "blocs" on the developing countries. Familiar papal themes reappear: the arms race and the arms trade fit in the description of structures of sin; the debt problem and its stranglehold on development; the centrality of human rights—political and economic—for authentic development and legitimate government.

In John Paul II's view none of these issues is being adequately addressed. There is reason to find many parties responsible, and the superpowers are targeted in this encyclical with particular clarity. The purpose is less to condemn than to invite us to a profound change in behavior. A solid Lenten message. □

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DEATH IN THE CONVENT

OUR DAYS ARE LIKE GRASS

JOAN SAURO

From the outside the three-story, grey stone structure looks imposing, something like a fortress, secure. Set upon a hill, surrounded by twenty-five acres of land, the building has every reason to be these things. Its four wings spread out to the four winds, but the wings are battened down, grown into roots. This is the mother convent for the Sisters of St. Jude, patron of hopeless cases. His statue stands in a bed of roses out front.

The motherhouse is relatively new and should not be showing cracks in the sub-basement walls, zigzag lines in the floor. At first it was said that the house was settling. Now it is generally acknowledged that there are deeper problems. Upstairs, the halls of the motherhouse are very long and dark. The bedrooms off them are small, enough to hold a single bed, a desk, nightstand, a sink, and next to that a narrow closet.

Once or twice a year the sisters come from far and wide to celebrate Community Day. Then every bedroom on every floor and wing is filled. Then the halls are just a little brighter for the talk and laughter and hasty greetings.

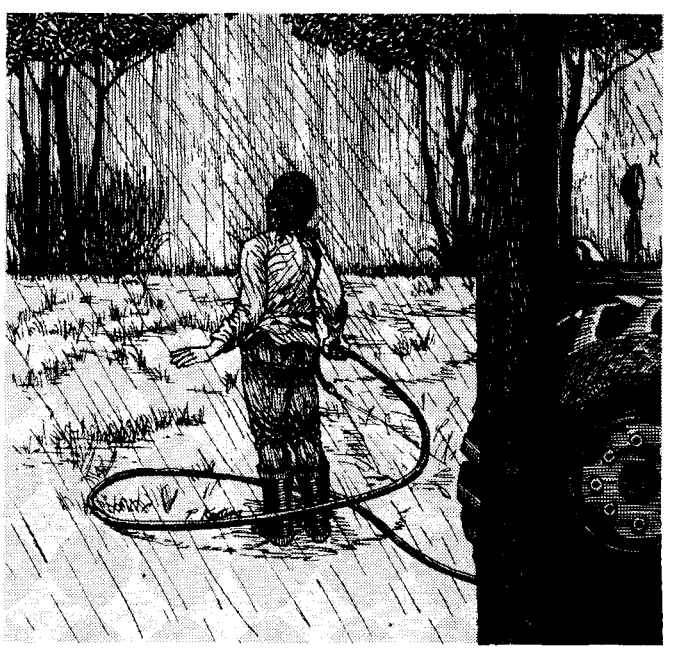
When the celebration is over, the sisters hurry to the small cars parked close out front, all the way down to the cemetery where other sisters lie close under stones unremarkable in their uniformity. No way to distinguish the great from the small.

The house then, when the visitors have gone, is terrifying. The wind howls and cries in the empty stairwells, runs up and down the empty halls, looking to rest somewhere, and finally rattles down exhausted in the basement. Then the sisters who live in the house shut the doors to their small bedrooms and try not to hear that the wind is dying.

Sister Eva knew where to find the rope, how to measure the heft and length of it. She was, after all, at home with the tractors and snowplows and the boiler room full of tools. I last saw her two summers ago on a scorching July day. I had come to the motherhouse to help in the business office. It was only a five-week stint on the typewriter, but already the sound of so many machines banging away in such a small, airless room was getting to me. I was glad to take my lunch out on the twenty-five acres.

That day Eva was on the lawnmower, cutting down the acreage, sweat pouring off her face plastering the old pants and shirt to her short, stocky frame. I was flat on my back under a row of trees. Now and then I would turn my head in the direction of the lawnmower. Off in the distance, Eva looked peaceful enough, riding the wide open spaces in old clothes, doing her good and useful work. I did not know her very well, which was not unusual in a community of five hundred sisters. I did know that she was fond of outdoor work and not at all fond of the way the caretaker took care of the place. So Eva had climbed onto his equipment and gradually taken over his territory.

Maybe it was the lunch, maybe the heat of the day, but somehow Eva managed to steer the tractor very near the row of trees without my hearing her. She had the thing in idle practically on my toes before I jumped. She laughed over the



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running motor and lifted a canteen she had wedged between the seat and the door. I smiled at her offer, shouted a loud thank you, and lifted up a can of juice I had brought with me. There, in the middle of that burnt up place, we toasted each other, two mavericks out on a hot day, while the rest of the community was lunching in a hot dining room.

Then she went back to her hills, I went back to the business machines, and the heat of the day got thicker. I never gave her kindness another thought. I certainly did not note that on that day Sister Eva whom I hardly knew went out of her way to offer me a cup of cold water in Christ's name and that he would never forget her for it. Only months later did these things come to me. That day I simply went back to my typing.

At the end of the day, when the business office closed for good, I went out back and sat for awhile on the loading dock. By this time the sky had darkened and a storm was rumbling over the town below. There was no rain yet over the twenty-five acres, but it was coming. There didn't seem to be much wind preceding the storm, just the steady rumble, getting very close, and Eva standing in her bare feet over by the boiler room, hosing down the lawnmower from stem to stern.

They were both of them soaked, seaworthy. In and out of the muddy tire studs she aimed the water full force, then over the metallic yellow sides, and up into the sky that was soon roaring and pouring water back down on her. Before long her hair hung like strings of kelp around her face. She closed her eyes, opened her mouth, and took a big chunk of whatever it was heaven had to offer. Light zigzagged across the sky, leaving rips and tears. More water fell, and when I left the shelter of the loading dock, Sister Eva was still not finished.

Rabbi Kushner says that when you are at the end of your rope, you say what am I going to do now, and who on earth is there to help me. When you find a strength beyond what you know is in you, he says, there is the saving presence of God. And when someone on earth comes to help you, there too, is the saving presence of God.

And when you are at the end of your rope and there is no one to help you? Well, then you write a note saying that the headaches are more than you can bear and you can't take it any more.

On November 1, Feast of All Saints, Sister Eva was found hanging from a rope in the shower room.

They say the souls of the just are in the hands of God.

They say anyone who loves her life loses it. Anyone who hates her life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

They say Sister Eva may have had water on the brain.

They say the last anyone saw of her was at the Halloween party the night before. She was on her knees dunking for apples. Did she think to hold her face under the water longer than usual? Perhaps. But by then the rope was waiting in her bedroom. All anyone can say is that on the last night of her life, this daughter of Eve dunked for apples and won.

They say it is a sin of the worst kind to take your own life.

They say the Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

They say Eva spent long hours in chapel the last week of her life.

They say she looked more peaceful in death than she had looked in the last months of her life. Still, I saw for myself her wide, smooth forehead with hair the color of burnt summer hills and the wind tossed lightly through, her suit of dark brown like the earth. Still, they say our days are like grass and this does seem so. The wind blows and we are gone.

I saw the funeral man wheel the casket around so the lid was facing us who sat in the large, motherhouse chapel. He fussed like a housewife smoothing a drawer. He laid a white cloth over the face, turned in the edges of white cloth lining the box, closed the lid, and snapped it locked with a violence that shook the house of God.

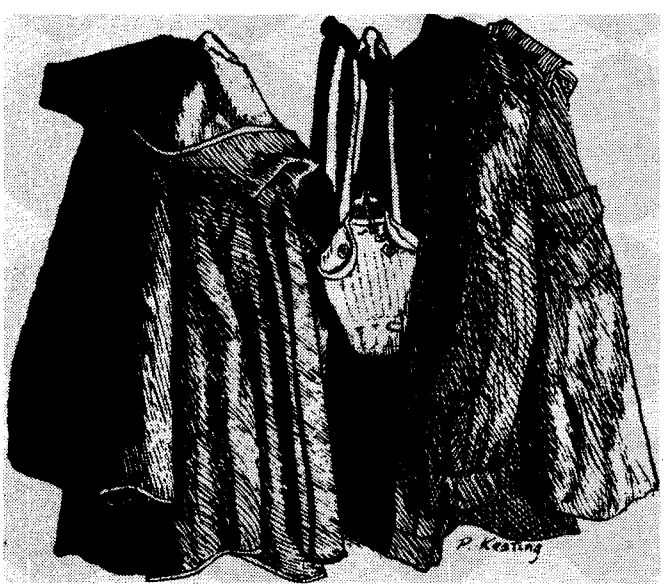
They say in some convents sisters sit with small glasses of wine and wonder over their sister's courage. In other convents they sit and look at each other and wonder.

They say that Jesus Christ himself hung between heaven and earth. He did this to save us.

They say no matter what you say, what's done is done, and no one can say a thing for sure beyond that.

There is, of course, one who can say for sure, but no one thinks to ask her. She watches us gather sadly. She sees us find chairs close to each other, pat each other's hands as we sit, look anxiously in the Superior's direction, hoping for some raft of relief. The Superior's words are guarded, compassionate, half-apologetic.

Sister Eva is right there and her mouth is moving. But no words come out. Not a single one. Over in a vacant corner a chair is disturbed. All the other close-knit chairs stiffen. The Superior stops talking. But no one dares to look toward the corner. No one needs to be reminded that Sister Eva is always there watching — pervasive, oppressive, always with eyes at



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the windows and doors. She watches us violate her drawers, her closet, her trunk in the basement, her work place in the boiler room, watches us search for clues, as if tools and shirts and papers could talk.

She watches us bring the priest to her bedroom, watches him throw holy water enough to wash the place clean, so much water it runs down the walls and desk and nightstand, soaks itself into the white bedspread. She sees him go into the shower and bless the empty stalls, one in particular. She sees that he does not touch the gleaming bar.

She also sees that despite the blessing no one goes into the shower room, no one is inclined to move into her bedroom. Visitors assigned there discreetly remove themselves to another part of the house, sleep on sofas, if they must. One by one the sisters next door, across the hall, two doors down move to another part of the house. Some move out altogether. Sister Eva sees it all.

Sometimes she howls and cries in the empty stairwells, runs up and down the halls looking to rest somewhere. Then the sisters in the house lock the doors to their small bedrooms. They close the triple-glass windowpanes and try not to hear the cries, try not to hear the groan of the tractor running across the hill in the middle of the night. In the morning they complain about the caretaker. They say he runs the tractor into the woods at night, that he helps himself to their firewood.

But they know who it is. And she knows they know.

She knows too that I took the canteen out of the tractor, pried it loose from its wedge between the seat and the door. I took it home with the water still in it and hung it by its leathery straps on a clothes peg, just inside our front door. I have memorized every sinew and shade of those straps, every twist they make down to the metal hooks holding them to the canteen. I know every single fiber of the dirty canvas covering that canteen, the button-down flaps, the tarnished brass buttons, the grease marks like fingers gripping the curved sides.

Every morning when I come back from Mass, I stop at the clothes peg and unscrew the green metal cap that falls on a chain down the front of the canteen. I take one, long, slow swallow. Then I screw the cap on tight and leave the canteen half buried under the coats and jackets. Only Sister Eva sees me do it. Only she knows I do not refill the canteen.

Then she watches me go through drawers and closets and cupboards, removing little by little the accumulation of years. Never have I seen so many needy people. So much thirst. So much need to cover my tracks.

Once or twice a year we all return for Community Day at the motherhouse. Sometime during our stay most of us find our way down to the cemetery, there to remember those who have gone before us. At the head of the cemetery and towering over it hangs the one who went before all of us. They say he conquered death, once and for all. There is not a sound spot on him as he hangs in the darkened sky.

They say the storm that day was so fierce it tore the temple veil in two and, soon after, the temple as well. Some say the sky grew black as night. Others say it was more like purple and red, with shafts of light. They say the earth rumbled and broke and people fled for their lives.

But there was not a sound spot on the man who hung in the storm with hardly a breath in him, only the body's sagging and the horrendous heaving against the sag. Around the broken head there was, pressed for good measure, a thornbush wreath not unlike the kind people weave for their Christmas doors. Only this was no Christmas.

From head to foot there was not a sound spot on the man's body, but the pain gathered full force and zigzagged in brilliant shafts inside his head. Just under the thorns, the eye of the storm raged in the man's eye, and in the glassy eyeball was not the reflection of the storm above him, nor even the sight of his distraught mother below him. Uppermost in the man's splitting head and clear as day in his rolling eyeball was Eva, herself hanging and heaving.

Now he hangs at the head of the cemetery. All around him the graves lie unadorned, all except Sister Eva's. Someone has put a plastic rose under glass in front of her small stone. Water forms on the rose petals. Just a matter of condensation, they say.

Almost two winters have passed and already a new row of graves is in place. On every one we read, "rest in peace," and we believe they do. But Sister Eva neither rests nor sleeps. She watches.

One by one we approach the edge, some of us screaming, some of us calm. One by one Sister Eva throws us a stalwart rope and pulls, pulls mightily, pulls with those sinewy arms of hers until she has got us safely across the wide, dark abyss. □

Jack Lindeman

Growing Deaf

I am tired of listening
with my ears shaped like knotholes
and nothing in sight.
I lie down in my own trough
and feed on my mind.
Each nibble enriches a thought,
each sound but a silence.
No harassment of words
though the wind can be clever with sighs
and the leaves chatter like verbs
while I in my bones
lying down in a dream
am locked like a monk
in his cell:
not one who has died,
snug as a seed in its clay,
but more like a child
confined with his toys,
concealed from the prattle of rain.

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STILL AWAITING THE SECOND SPRING

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S CLANDESTINE CHURCH

GEOFFREY GNEUHS

Since January of this year, over 300,000 citizens of Czechoslovakia have signed a document petitioning their government for the separation of church and state and for full and complete religious freedom. The extraordinary number of signatories is yet another expression of the yearnings of the Czechoslovak people for reforms in their society twenty years after "Prague Spring," that time of liberalization and hope which ended abruptly and brutally with the invasion of Soviet troops (actually, as any Czechoslovak will tell you, most of the troops were already there, and remain so today).

The petition of January, a thirty-one point document, follows upon the issuance last September of the Charter for Believers, a sixteen-point manifesto which called for such openings in Czechoslovak society as religious liberty, release of imprisoned priests, the right of the Vatican to appoint bishops (presently, only three out of thirteen dioceses have full, active bishops), and for the legalization of religious orders. It also made a plea to Catholics throughout the world to pressure Czechoslovak diplomats and embassies on behalf of religious freedom. Expanding on the original Charter for Believers, the January petition, supported by the aged Cardinal Frantisek Tomasek, demands that there be no state interference in the exercise of one's religion, that the state restore church property, that the state permit new churches to be built, and that pilgrims be allowed to travel to shrines outside of Czechoslovakia.

On March 5, 1988 in Prague—on the eve of a Catholic pilgrimage aimed at pressing for religious freedom—thirteen people were arrested, including human rights activist Stanislav Devaty and playwright Vaclav Havel. Six others were detained briefly.

Last October Pope John Paul II took notice of the gravity of the repression of the church in Czechoslovakia—one of the most tightly controlled countries in the Eastern bloc. On the occasion of the *ad limina* visit of the Czechoslovak episcopacy, attended only by the eighty-eight-year-old Cardinal Tomasek, the pope asked, "Where are the others? Only five years ago they were with you." The three other bishops were unable to attend. The Czechoslovak government also refused travel permits for Monsignor Jan Hirka, apostolic administrator of Presov, and Dr. Silvester Krcmery, a layman, both of whom were papal appointees to the October Synod of Bishops. The situation, declared the pope, is "without parallel" in countries traditionally Christian.

In November, one of the bishops, Jan Korec, protested this blatant instance of persecution in a letter to the Communist daily, *Rude Pravo*. He observed that the "two empty seats for our delegates kept reminding the participants in the synod" of the deplorable conditions in Czechoslovakia, and noted that that "embarrassing deed [the refusal to grant visas] has entered history." In the same letter the bishop cited numerous other abuses: young people investigated by the police for reading Scripture and singing hymns while on outings and trips to the country; a priest, Father Javorsky, sentenced in April 1987 to eight months in prison for celebrating Mass in a private home; another priest, eighty years old, convicted and imprisoned for hearing confessions in a church without having first obtained permission from the Communist authorities; and a layman prosecuted for giving catechetical instruction to his relatives. "These malpractices against religious freedom," wrote Bishop Korec, "are too frequent; they are systematic." All this in a nation whose law states, "It is the task of the state . . . to assure that the church and religious life develop in harmony with the Constitution and with the principles of the people's democratic state order, so as to safeguard for each and everyone the right to freedom of creed based on the principles of religious tolerance and equal rights."

Christianity has been an integral and historic part of the life of the lands of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, which comprise modern-day Czechoslovakia. Sts. Cyril and Methodius arrived as missionaries in the ninth century. From time to time throughout the Middle Ages this rich region played a significant role in international affairs. Prague, with its Charles University, founded in the fourteenth century, was one of the leading cities of Europe and remains today a baroque jewel nestled among hills along the river Vltava.

But over the centuries freedom and independence for these people have been elusive: German domination, then Austrian incorporation, two decades of freedom after World War I, only to be followed by Nazi invasion and war, culminating in the

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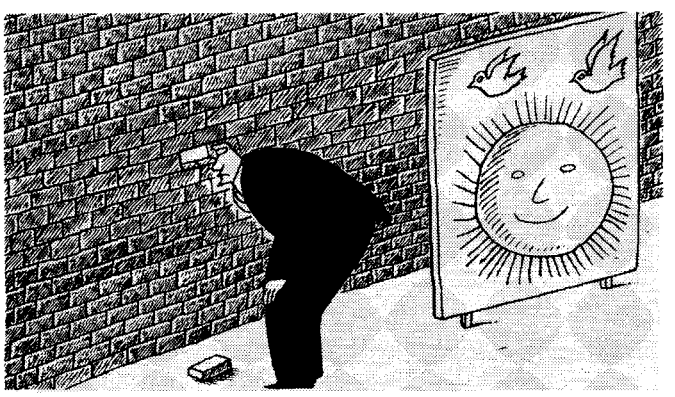
chaos after World War II and the seizure of power by the Communists and the elimination of democratic leaders—such as Jan Masaryk—and of all vestiges of democracy itself.

Since 1948, when the Communists took full control of the government, it has been impossible to publish books of a theological nature. In that year the Communists shut down thirty Catholic journals, all Catholic publishing houses, and closed the Catholic schools. In October 1949 the State Office for Church Affairs was established; henceforward all priests needed specific permission to function: to say Mass, hear confessions, lead prayer services, funerals, weddings, etc. Even today the dates and times for such functions must be cleared with state authorities. In 1950, 200 monasteries were raided and abolished. Thousands of priests, monks, nuns, and bishops were imprisoned or sent to state farms. The Greek Uniate church was abolished. Seminaries were closed. It was an attempt by the then president Antonin Novotny to liquidate the church.

Novotny was deposed as party leader in early 1968, and succeeded by the reformer Alexander Dubcek. Under Dubcek, there was a genuine attempt at restructuring the system in general and ending religious persecution in particular. But that "aggiornamento" was short-lived. It came to a sudden end with the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968 and the ascension of Gustav Husak as Communist party head the following year. By 1970 new repressive measures were being enacted in the religious sphere: convents were forbidden to take novices; religious houses and programs were shut down; seminary enrollment was severely curtailed; and hospital chaplains were even prohibited from distributing Communion to the sick and dying. Today in Bratislava, a city of 400,000 and Czechoslovakia's second largest city, there are only twenty priests—this in a country where even by government statistics nearly 70 percent of the population is Catholic.

Meanwhile, the government has actively cultivated a group called Pacem in Terris, made up of priests friendly to the regime, as a way to drive a wedge between Czechoslovak Catholics and the Vatican. Such efforts have not led to the results the Communist regime had hoped for. Both the pope and Cardinal Tomasek have repeatedly condemned the goals of Pacem in Terris and forbidden Catholics to participate. Moreover, the people themselves have seen through the sinister motives of the state. The government, nevertheless, has insisted that any new episcopal appointments be made from those priests who are members of Pacem in Terris. This the Vatican adamantly refuses to do. Another round of talks with the Vatican is scheduled for this month. The *New York Times* recently reported that the Prague government will propose the nomination of Pacem in Terris member Frantisek Vymetal as archbishop of Olomouc, in exchange for the episcopal nomination of two priests loyal to the Vatican. So far, the Vatican has refused.



Ironically, yet not so surprisingly, as the government encouraged Pacem in Terris as "official" and "loyal" Catholics, Catholicism has begun to flourish in a bold and dramatic way—as the "clandestine church." Cardinal Tomasek commented recently that the religious revival is observable particularly among the young. The Charter for Believers and the subsequent 300,000 signatories of the later, expanded manifesto attest to the renewed vitality and vigor of Catholicism in Czechoslovakia. The "clandestine church" publishes four journals in *samizdat*: *Resurrection, Theological Texts, Information on the Church,* and *Religion and the Contemporary World*. More priests than ever before are taking risks to exercise their sacramental ministry for the underground church without seeking state permission. In the past decade, three of the spokespersons of Charter 77—the human rights group begun in 1977 and inspired in part by the Helsinki Accords of 1975—have been Catholics: Vaclav Benda, serving in 1979 and 1984, a philosopher and mathematician; Vaclav Maly, serving in 1981, a priest; and Radim Palous, serving in 1982, a philosopher. Benda spent four years in prison and lost his job; Maly was beaten and imprisoned and lost permission from the state to function as a priest; Palous, an elderly man, was fired from his job at Charles University and lectures now at unofficial seminars.

Dr. Erika Kadlecova, a Marxist sociologist and former commissioner for religious affairs under Dubcek, herself a signer of Charter 77, has recently written in *samizdat* that the "interest in religion and the church seems more evident in the cities, particularly in Prague, than in the country, among intellectuals and among the young people." In an essay studying religious phenomena today in her country, she writes, "Christians sacrifice career, status, comfort, and benefits. The mutual aid and support and the friendly refuge afforded—the only one that has replaced relations in our atomized society—are greatly enhanced in church communities by their metaphysical aspect—seeing God in one's fellow." This in a country which, according to Kadlecova, "bears all the familiar signatures of decay, skepsis, hopelessness, and apathy"—a system which forces people to pretend that they believe the pronouncements of the state—knowing they obviously contradict daily experience and reason—and to voice opinions on issues from which they have been barred all access to information.

On the anniversary of the death of St. Methodius in the spring of 1985, nearly 150,000 pilgrims came to the village of

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I had an interesting time in a Chicago cab last winter. The driver picked up my wife, my son, and me. We noticed that he had a television set in the front seat of his cab, which is, I think, illegal.

The news was on. We heard something about the murder of a woman we had met once. When I mentioned it to my wife the driver overheard and said, "I'm sorry evil has touched you so close, brother, but you know it's only going to get worse, now that we're in the Last Days." We made the sort of noncommittal sounds most non-fundamentalists do when the Last Days are brought up so earnestly, and he went on: "Yes, the son of Satan is on the earth now, and we think we have a pretty good idea who he is." It turned out that a rather convoluted interpretation of Scripture had made it clear to our driver that the European Economic Community was prefigured in the Old Testament, and that the Anti-Christ was . . . King Juan Carlos of Spain.

—John Garvey
"Is There No End in Sight?"
Commonweal, February 26, 1988

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Velehrad to honor this saint, the missionary to the Slavs. According to the Helsinki Watch Committee, it was the "most dramatic demonstration of religious activity and its growth" in the last decade, despite the fact that there was no publicity and that invited guests, including the pope and other religious leaders from throughout the world, were denied travel permits. This event, along with the Charter for Believers and the January petition, are evidence that the situation of the church in Czechoslovakia can no longer remain "normal." In fact, it is no longer normal. A new era in history has begun. Even if—and at this point, it is unlikely—the Communist authorities were to relinquish their say in the appointment of bishops, the clandestine church will remain and thrive. It reflects and articulates issues, more fundamental than the obvious political-organizational struggle between the state and the Vatican, though these are indeed important. The clandestine church is that "refuge," that "metaphysical aspect — seeing God in one's fellow" as noted by Dr. Kadlecova.

Major reforms initiated from above are not likely at this point. The current Communist party secretary, Milos Jakes, is a protégé of Gustav Husak and a member of the group which replaced the Dubcek reformers twenty years ago. The government is feeling pressure not only from groups like Charter for Believers and *Lidowe Nowiny* (*People's News*), an independent newspaper that has just begun to publish, but from Mikhail Gorbachev himself. The Soviet leader is attempting major economic reforms in the Soviet Union, but he realizes that the economic structure of the entire Eastern bloc must undergo an overhaul if his own domestic policies are to be realized.

The Czechoslovak leadership is ambivalent and wary. Can economic reforms be made without encouraging impulses for freedom in religious and cultural affairs? Twenty years ago Dubcek and his followers wanted reforms and liberalization because they believed these were necessary for revitalizing the nation. Yet there are no signs that Jakes and the entrenched Czechoslovak bureaucracy hold such beliefs today. Indeed, they hold power precisely for having suppressed such impulses. For the time being, the Czechoslovak government will act cautiously.

There is something that the Vatican could do, however, which, while not affecting its official negotiations with the government concerning the empty episcopal sees, would be a historic gesture which would only nourish and honor the clandestine church and the people of Czechoslovakia as a whole. The Vatican should reopen and review the trial, condemnation, and execution of John Hus, the priest from Bohemia who was convicted of heresy under dubious procedures at the Council of Constance in 1414 and was burned at the stake reciting the Creed. Writing in the independent Polish Catholic journal, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, in February 1986, Stefan Swiezawski suggested that Pope John Paul II clear "that great, martyred figure of the accusations that unjustly encumber him." At the time Hus was tried, the church had three popes fighting over power and influence. Justice requires a fair review of his teachings.

During his lifetime, Hus was considered a national hero in

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Bohemia because of his efforts to rid his country of German domination. Today a more insidious domination exists. For Pope John Paul to acknowledge the significance John Hus has in the national and spiritual yearnings of the people of Czechoslovakia would be a gesture of profound ecumenical import both within Czechoslovakia and abroad. It would be an acknowledgment on the part of the church that perhaps the work of the Spirit in the church in the fifteenth century can only now be seen and understood. It would be a gesture of love and admiration for the enduring faith of the people of Czechoslovakia who have had a long and harsh winter and who hope that there will be another "spring" in Prague. □

ROME WELCOMES MARRIED PRIESTS

FLUKE OR PRECEDENT?

JOSEPH H. FICHTER

The Holy See did not enjoin silence on the American hierarchy in 1980, when granting "pastoral provisions" for the acceptance of married Episcopal clergymen into the Catholic priesthood in this country. Nevertheless, Cardinal Seper, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, suggested that publicity be kept at a low key. "The bishops weren't hiding anything," said one of the new priests, "but at the same time they didn't want to wave a red flag at the groups who were urging that we do away with celibacy." On the other hand, they did not want to shock those Catholics who are scandalized at the very thought of married priests.

Yet, there seems to be an aura of secrecy about this innovation. Although a recent Gallup Poll found more than six out of ten (63 percent) Catholic lay persons in favor of married priests, there are still large numbers of American Catholics who are unaware that an increasing minority of Catholic priests are also husbands. Up to now this could happen only by way of transfer from a Protestant church. Any American Catholic seminarian who is planning matrimony before receiving holy orders might as well leave the seminary. He would have a better prospect in one of the Eastern Catholic churches. From the earliest centuries, the Eastern churches have ordained married men, but have not married ordained men. In *that* part of the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church it has always been true that husbands may become priests but priests may not become husbands.

What is "novel" about the presence of married priests in the American Catholic church is the formal procedure of admission, established in 1980 at the specific request of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. It was aimed at the prospect of numbers of Episcopalians, clergy and laity, who seemed ready to convert to Catholicism after the 1976 decision of their General Convention to accept women priests. Previously, and in other countries, the Holy See had accepted married priests. In the early 1950s the Archbishop of Mainz, Germany, presented three married Lutheran pastors for ordination. Since then, a total of about fifteen married priests have been accepted in continental Europe. About a half-dozen have been incardinated in the dioceses of Australia. The American experience is a complete novelty only in America.

One of the reasons why these married priests are not widely known is because they do not do much parish work. One of the provisions was that they not be assigned to the "ordinary care of souls" during the first five years after diocesan incardination. The assumption seems to have been that the ordinary parishioner would be "scandalized" to see a married man celebrating Mass, while his wife takes charge of the rectory and his children play on the front lawn of the church. The threat of derogating the reputation of the celibate priesthood has been lessened— at least temporarily—by assigning these men to non-parochial ministries as teachers and administrators, as chaplains in hospitals, colleges, and prisons.

Such non-parochial assignments, however, have not completely immunized the parish laity from contact with married priests. The worrisome clergy shortage in the Catholic church is probably most severe at the parish level, where there are not enough priests to cover the conventional religious needs of the people. The local bishop's practical arrangement, therefore, is to give these priests a double assignment. They become part-time parish priests, celebrating and preaching on the weekend, and "filling in" wherever the pastor has the most need of their assistance. At the same time, they already have daily contact with many laity in their institutional roles.

While there has been little objection from the Catholic laity who happen to be aware of the "breakthrough" on traditional clerical celibacy, the first anguished complaints came from resigned Catholic priests who had married. As though in anticipation of this respectful protest, the Holy See had already specified that "this exception to the rule of celibacy is granted

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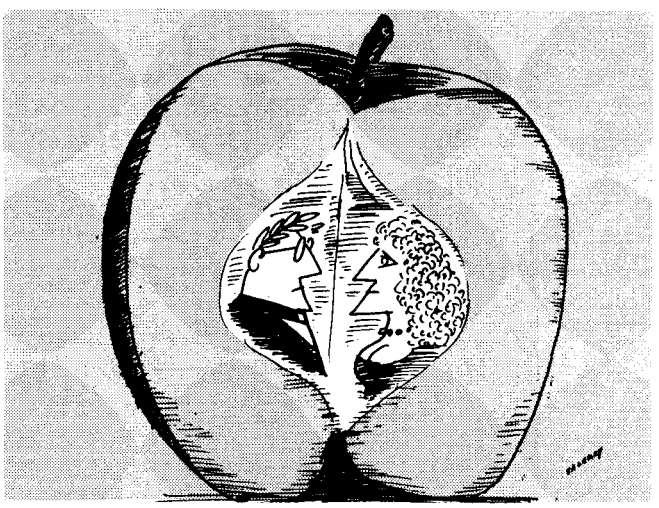
in favor of those individual persons, and should not be understood as implying any change in the church's conviction of the value of priestly celibacy." Hundreds of resigned priests, who maintain a deep devotion to the church, would like to be included in this "exception to the rule of celibacy." With a touch of cynicism, Frank Bonnike, a leader of CORPUS (Committee of Resigned Priests United for Service) asked whether "a Roman Catholic priest who left the Catholic priesthood to marry and become an Episcopalian priest now can be accepted back into the church."

The explanation, why the Episcopal priest may bring his wife with him and why the resigned Catholic priest may not, has been put in the bluntest moral terms. The man who abandoned the Episcopal church to join the true church of Rome is to be praised for good moral behavior. He deserves commendation and rewards. The man who abandoned the Catholic priesthood to take a wife is to be blamed for reprehensible moral behavior. He is to be scolded and penalized. In the former case it does not matter that the priest is married; in the latter case it is the only thing that matters. In the first case he has to leave his church but retains his wife; in the second case he has to leave his wife but retains his church.

A different kind of complaint has been voiced by Catholic liberals, especially by proponents of the Women's Ordination Conference, who are sure that these former Episcopal clergy bring with them a conservative church ideology. Cardinal Bernard Law, appointed by the Vatican to oversee these transfers, seemed to anticipate this complaint even before any of them had been officially received. After interviewing the first applicants, he claimed that it would be impossible to "characterize them as either conservative or liberal. They do not fit a mold any more easily than do Catholic priests."

Nevertheless, the timing and the volume of these applications after the 1977 Episcopal schism cannot escape the fact that the focal protest was against female priests. Motivation is always multiple and complex, but these men are viewed as "dissidents" seeking refuge in the Catholic church, only after the Episcopal General Convention in Minneapolis ratified the ordination of women.



No matter what other explanations may be offered, the historical event that triggered the decision to apply to Rome was the decision to ordain women. John Jay Hughes remarked that "the Roman Catholic church may not afford permanent protection against what they consider a nightmare." In the present mood of the Vatican one could say it is unthinkable that women be ordained to the priesthood. Yet, this eventuality is thinkable to almost half (47 percent) of American Catholic laity answering a 1985 Gallup Poll. Bishop Spong of Newark has angrily charged that the acceptance of Episcopal priests into the Catholic church is a deliberate repudiation of his church's approval of the ordination of women.

A more practical problem, and sometimes a hindrance, for these transfer priests is the lack of enthusiasm on the part of Catholic bishops who want nothing to do with them. These priests cannot even begin the process of transfer until they have found a bishop who is willing to present their case to the Holy See. Some bishops are known for their unwillingness to "try anything new." Others will accept only celibate clergy converts. Still others feel constrained to decline because they have no institutional chaplaincies available, and have good use only for priests who can do parish work. There is a vague rumor about a "liberal" bishop who interviewed a conservative applicant, and after meeting with his consultors said he could not accept priests who are unfavorably disposed to women's ordination.

Among the diocesan clergy, the first reaction to these "strangers" seems to depend largely on the manner in which their bishop handles the case. In general, the transfer priests report a charitable reception by the clergy, but with some stiffness and formality in the relationship. A few have been popular enough to be elected to the clergy council; all have been invited for weekend "supply" at one parish or another. In several instances nuns have taken umbrage that these "outsiders" have been accepted while many resigned priests are excluded. A certain coolness has been detected also among the Irish clergy who do not fully appreciate the "English" background of these priests.

If not all the Roman Catholics are elated by the advent of these former Episcopal priests, neither do all the Episcopalians look upon this situation benevolently. One critical Episcopal rector thinks they are something less than high quality men: "As a matter of fact, they are not much of a loss to us, and they're not much of a gain to you." He thought it was just as well that they left a church with which they were dissatisfied. "They couldn't keep up with the contemporary changes in the church. More than that, they are disloyal to their serious commitments." Another Episcopal priest did not find fault with the "renegades," but applauded their departure because it opened opportunities in the overcrowded "job market" of the Episcopal clergy. It was noted also that the Church of England suffers a clergy shortage, but that few priests want to go to England where they are needed.

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It is probably true that the growing category of "low church" Episcopalians have little or no concern about their departing clergy. The fact is that these men are almost exclusively from the "Anglo-Papalists" who constitute less than 20 percent of the American Protestant Episcopal Church. These "high church" Episcopalians are firmly convinced that their priests are validly ordained, and they resent the Vatican insistence that these transfer priests must submit to Catholic holy orders. This revives the memory of a papal bull of 1896, that most ecumenical experts consider a "dead letter." The priest who has been celebrating the sacraments ever since his ordination in the Episcopal church is now asked to submit to a new and authentic Catholic ordination. No one knows how many Episcopal priests are deterred by this regulation. It is certainly an affront to the bishops and theologians of the Anglican persuasion, who have long since proven to themselves that Leo XIII's noninfallible statement of 1896 is itself a void document. Nevertheless, this condition rankles the Episcopalian authorities and tends to weaken the ecumenical relationship between the two churches.

At the center of all these arguments, being buffeted by his former friends and by his current associates, is the man who is now in a new and different environment. Regardless of the reasons alleged to him, why he made up his mind to shift to the Roman church, he did have to make a resolution of conscience. I have asked a number of such priests why they became Catholics, and although all are different a common theme runs through them: It was the conviction that the fullness of Christianity lies in Rome. There were no sudden "conversions." In fact, they are not religious and spiritual converts. They have been Anglo-Papalists from their seminary days. Why did they not "cross the Tiber" sooner?

Without exception they were Anglo-Catholics in their training and beliefs, long convinced of the "branch" theory of Christian unity, and certain that the break with Rome in the sixteenth century was a political blunder. One priest told me, "as long as the Anglican church adhered to the Lambeth Quadrilaterals I was satisfied. As long as the Anglican church officially taught the Catholic faith, stood by the Catholic seven sacraments, and maintained the Catholic succession of ministry, I could stay in the Anglican church. I knew that to be fully Catholic I should be in communion with the See of Peter. My moral justification for staying with Canterbury was that I was working and praying toward the communion. I could think that God put me there so I could work from the Anglican side to help restore corporate unity."

When they finally despaired of organic ecumenical unity between the two communions, they felt they had nowhere to turn except to Rome, and on an individualist basis. Indeed, they were informed that their personal "reconciliation" with the Catholic church was not to be interpreted as an ecumenical activity. Nevertheless, Archbishop John Quinn at the same time expressed the hope that the acceptance of these ex-Episcopal clergy would not "impede the ongoing Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical dialogue." Despite such declared hopes, and despite the relatively optimistic reports of the Joint

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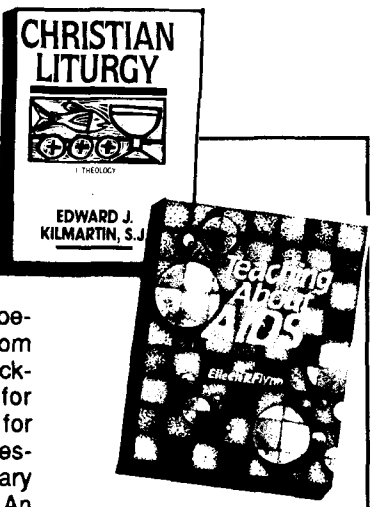
The Tradition Continues



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Commission on Anglican-Roman Catholics Relations in the United States, the Anglo-Papalists among the Episcopal clergy concluded that the policies and practices of their church were moving in the direction of "low-church" Protestantism. Through no fault of their own their transfer process has helped to widen rather than close the gap between the two churches.

It is not a smooth and easy experience to leave a church to which one has given a full and serious commitment. Making the shift from the Episcopal to the Catholic priesthood involves the certainty of being deposed by the Episcopal bishop and the uncertainty of receiving holy orders from the Catholic bishop. In other words, he is "defrocked" and is deprived of all the clergy rights and privileges that have accrued over the years. If he had been in the Episcopal clergy for less than ten years, he is cut off from the ultimate benefits of the pension fund. His income is sharply decreased and the living conditions of his family will be lowered during the year or more of preparation for ordination.

The network of long-established friendships tends to dissolve, and in some cases his relatives treat him like a stranger. "Certainly one of the most difficult things I ever did was tell the people of my congregation, my fellow Episcopal priests, and the bishop himself, that I was planning to enter the Catholic church." There is a deep human need to build new friendships in a new and different community. "The brotherhood with the priests is different. There are no clergy wives gatherings, obviously. We laugh when we say that, but that was a significant part of ministry in the Episcopal church—the wives play a big role. There was a close sense of fraternity, not only among the Episcopal priests, but among their families."

Perhaps the wives are the greater novelty in this new dispensation, and they are getting less publicity than their priest husbands. Of course, there are only about forty of them, and they are fairly well dispersed among the Catholic dioceses. One of them remarked that "it's much easier than being a minister's wife. The bishop is friendly. I don't have to be 'on call' for a congregation, teaching Sunday school, playing the organ, acting as hostess for endless lunches, teas, and receptions." Another said, "We don't have any example to imitate. We have to invent something new: the Catholic wife of a priest."

From this perspective the whole program is relatively novel. It was as recently as 1982 that the first Episcopal priest was ordained as a Catholic. The program was introduced as "provisional," and it must still be interpreted as experimental and temporary. Some of these priests seem to be disappointed that they are not being followed by large numbers of Episcopal priests eager to transfer. While those who have been received are assured of the permanent priesthood, there is no guarantee that the Holy See will continue the procedure as a permanent concession. Whether or not it is to be judged a lasting success is not up to the American Catholic laity or hierarchy, or to the participants themselves. The Vatican can, at any time, cancel the American bishops' right to ordain married Episcopal priests. □

SCREEN

YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN

MALLE'S 'ENFANTS' & HUBERT'S 'HIGHWAY'

Ever since François Truffaut made his two gems that gently deromanticized youth (the autobiographical *400 Blows* and the historical *The Wild Child*), the childhood memoir has had a fascination for filmmakers. Two of last year's examples of the genre are: Lasse Halstrom's *My Life as a Dog* and John Boorman's *Hope and Glory*. Now we have Louis Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* and Jean-Loup Hubert's *The Grand Highway*.

The genre and these particular examples are all European films, and in striking contrast to the recent flood of American "baby" movies: *Raising Arizona*, *Baby Boom*, *Three Men and a Baby*, and *She's Having a Baby*. Why are the European films so much better? One possible reason is generational—the American "boomers" will always be better at *being* than *having* children. Our addiction to innocence is part of the problem. In the baby movies, American adults don't act comically but childishly; the sitcom level of taste is infantile (for example, the diaper humor of *Three Men*, and its possible sexual overtones).

In the European memoirs, the childish monotone of the baby movies yields in two directions—to the childlike and to the adult. While an older sensibility looks back to childhood, it stays adult and is never allowed to displace the child, whose troubled, confused perspective dominates. In the European films the generations are distinguished; in the American, confounded. Only one native film about babies was decent, *Raising Arizona*, whose makers had the wit to unleash the full force of their vulgarity. At least they attained a style equal to their insights: cartoon.

The Grand Highway (Le Grand Chemin) is set in one of those villages in rural France where, from the church steeple, all you see is another village and church steeple across a wide, lush valley. Upon arriving in the village (circa 1950) a frightened, Parisian ten-year-old, Louis (Antoine Hubert, son of the director), sees a rabbit clubbed and skinned, hardly a genial prelude.

As in *My Life as a Dog*, the child's perspective dominates; here, however, there is nothing poetic about him, no soliloquies, no naif existentializing about fate. The child is passive, almost frail; when he is "farmed out" to the village by his pregnant mother (who has been abandoned by the father), he expresses his feelings by crying into her dress at a bus stop.

His new society in the village is also not so sweet; there are no funny rural eccentrics, unless one counts the long-winded curé and his-long limbed walks around the village, prayerbook in hand, like some cop on a spiritual beat. In his adopted "home" (overlooking a cemetery) the child is treated well by

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his mother's girlfriend Marcelle (Anemone), but is terrified by her surly, alcoholic, carpenter husband Pelo—the dour veteran actor, Richard Bohringer.

The toughest scene in the film (and because of its realism, the toughest in many a recent film) involves marital rape, which the child overhears while clutching his bedsheets at night. This terrible scene is pivotal. Set in a nursery filled with toys—which had been locked up, as in a Dickens novel, ever since Marcelle and Pelo lost an infant son—the assault begins the convincing changes traced in the film's second half. Louis responds less passively to his terror than we expect, and Hubert makes credible the way the child's sensitivity works a small domestic miracle. Homes are seen honestly in this film, with all their warts; accordingly, its final sentiment is earned.

The Grand Highway charms by quiet significance. Hubert manages to insinuate all ages and relations into the screenplay: the celibate priest, the widow (an old woman who constantly waters and weeds the grave of her husband), children at different stages of development, marriages starting, marriages barely surviving, marriages broken up. This survey of life, backed up by inclusion of the cemetery in many shots, provides a symbolic resonance to the title; the grand highway involves a pilgrimage.

Two elements are overdone: the child's active questioning of Pelo and Marcelle about their dead son and his sexually wild, little girl companion, Martine (Vanessa Guedge). The plot calls for some precociousness, but both examples seem excessive. One scene where Martine sings arias for the Queen of the Night rang untrue. But Hubert gives her some delightfully naughty lines, especially on the church roof where she uses the steeple gutters so grotesquely and comically that it might make one of the gargoyles blush. If he could take his eyes off the view.

Au Revoir les Enfants is Louis Malle's memoir of schooldays shared with young Jewish boys trying to evade the Nazis. Malle's metier has always been crafty understatement. While he sometimes goes too far with the strategy, here he succeeds magnificently, especially in a closing scene which brings home the cold finality of a Gestapo raid. Malle eschews caricature Nazis and wild Resistance histrionics; he provides instead calm efficiency. It helps that the Gestapo officer is played by Peter Fitz, a face familiar to some audiences from his role as a "humane" Nazi in *The Wansee Conference*.

Malle himself, as a schoolboy, is played by Gaspard Manesse. He befriends one of the new Jewish boys whom Father Jean, the prefect, attempts to hide as a regular student toward the end of the war. Manesse is mystified at first about the most intellectual of the boys, renamed Bonnet; he learns his real name is Kippelstein and insensitively teases him, then keeps the secret and befriends him.

Two scenes are key to the bonding: one school "treasure hunt" in the woods that turns to terror when the two boys are left behind at night; and a Sunday dinner with Manesse's mother when she visits. Both scenes are such realistic depictions of ordinary childhood experiences that their extraordinary conclusions, with Germans or Vichy police, seem at once both believable and outrageous.

Malle, who dealt with French collaboration in *Lacombe Lucien*, paints a complex picture of wartime morality. While some German combat soldiers are seen humanely, the camera almost hisses at the Vichy thugs; some of the schoolboys, unaware of the secret, parrot their parents' anti-Semitic language. A nun betrays the last Jewish child, but members of the staff and Father Jean are treated like heroes, and the latter is carted away to Mathausen. Would that every discussion of these events had such inclusive honesty!

Some observers profess fatigue with literary and cinematic examinations of the Holocaust. Certainly there is an artistic challenge in saying anything new. Malle manages by sticking with *his* facts; he gives renewed feeling to old truths. As a result, there is a conviction of having *been there* even after the surprise of Malle's voice-over at the end of the film, when (with the camera on Manesse), he claims that he has never forgotten that day in January 1944. The film is the gift of his memory.

Malle has had a distinguished career (this April, the Museum of Modern Art will mount a retrospective), and brings to *Au Revoir* not just his feelings and memories but his genius for composition that gives ordinary scenes (at bathhouses, music lessons, or in the old white-sheeted dormitory of the school) a vibrant intensity. *Au Revoir* fuses absolute sincerity and high art. It is a near masterpiece.

TOM O'BRIEN

STAGE

THE FOREST & THE TREES

BLESSING'S 'WALK'

My introduction to Lee Blessing's work came in 1986 with the premiere of *Eleemosynary* at the Philadelphia Festival Theatre of New Plays; it has since been performed at other regional theaters, although it has not yet reached New York. Despite the title, which refers to one character's fondness for words, it is a conventional exploration of differences and allegiances among three generations — grandmother, mother, daughter. Although the characters sometimes share scenes, my memory of the play is of each of the performers in her own playing area, separate, whatever the speeches might suggest about attachment. It was not a work that interested me very much. Little wonder that I failed to build up a head of anticipation at the news that Blessing was at work on a two-character play about arms negotiators. As so often happens in the theater, happily in this case, the event contradicted the expectation.

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A Walk in the Woods has now come to Broadway. The seed of the play was the celebrated walk in the woods that Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky took in Geneva in 1982, during which — away from the constraints of the negotiating table and their hovering staffs — they came up with an agreement that promised progress in the apparently endless arms reduction talks. It was rejected by their countries, but the walk, if not the aborted plan, remains a symbol of possibility. The encounter fascinated Blessing who saw a play in it although, as he told Herbert Mitgang (*New York Times,* January 21), in one of my least favorite locutions, he "wasn't into writing about a historical event." His characters — John Honeyman and Andrei Botvinnik — are not attempts to depict Nitze and Kvitsinsky. Honeyman is a specialist with a reputation as a successful negotiator at lower levels who for the first time brings his certainty about his skills to top-level meetings. Botvinnik is a veteran of the negotiation wars, a charmer whose ingratiating manner is both a ploy and a reflection of his personality. Nor is the 1982 plan presented here. In fact, no plan is — no catalogue of weapons and possible reductions, no avalanche of acronyms to befuddle the audience. A plan is offered and accepted onstage and rejected offstage, but what it contains we never know. Nor should we. Blessing's play is about the process and its effect on the two men.

Both the Mitgang piece and a later *Times* group interview (February 21) indicate that the playwright, the director, and the performers are absorbed by the public, the political side of *A Walk in the Woods*. In the course of the play, Botvinnik breaks through the priggishness of Honeyman and Honeyman circumvents the playfulness of Botvinnik. The Russian agrees to take Honeyman's project to his government. The positive suggestion at this point is that two men, different in personality as in nationality, can meet on the common ground of their concern for the survival of the earth. When Honeyman's country rejects his own plan (the president tells him not to try too hard), it falls to Botvinnik to explain what he has learned from his years at the table — neither of the superpowers wants an agreement. There are too many conflicting internal pressures in both countries, and the most one can expect are continued talks. Despite his dark analysis of the game they are playing, Botvinnik, who is resigning, urges Honeyman to stay on and deal with his replacement, and Honeyman insists that he still has hope.

"I like to think that *A Walk in the Woods* is a little more optimistic than the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting," Blessing told Mitgang, but the play — as it is performed — is much more pessimistic than this declaration suggests. Sam Waterston's voice breaks as he speaks Honeyman's lines about hope; this is not an assertion of faith but a cry of desperation. As I write this, Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze have announced first steps toward a treaty on long-distance weapons while some members of the Congress and the Senate are talking about improving (i.e., undercutting) last year's agreement on intermediate- and short-range missiles. The hope and the breaking voice both seem appropriate.

Despite the importance of its subject matter, *A Walk in the Woods*, as a play, is finally less interesting for its political statements than for its depiction of the two men and what negotiations do to them. Botvinnik's jokes, his talk of friendship, his preoccupation with trivial matters at first seem to Honeyman to be calculated attempts to avoid serious negotiations. Before the play ends, they can be seen as survival devices, for the man not the world — Botvinnik's reaction to his sense that he has been working for years in an arena of predetermined failure. Honeyman is a more familiar character — or two characters. He is the rigid personality softened into amiability against his better judgment, but he is also the educated innocent, the man destined to learn that good sense and good intentions are not sure winners in a complex world. When Botvinnik reveals his own sense of emptiness as a way of tempering Honeyman's courage and pain, the play becomes moving both for their shared loss and for their attempt to reassert possibility.

There are some problems with the production. Des McAnuff, the director, moves the actors so that wherever they come to rest they convey artificiality. I do not think that this is intentional since Blessing's lines and McAnuff's own remarks in the second *Times* interview define the woods as a natural force, a release from the formality of negotiation. It does not help that the woods here look like nothing so much as a stage set. These infelicities become unimportant in the face of the two fine performances. Robert Prosky's Botvinnik is the diplomat as clown, but he seems to try a bit too hard; from the beginning, the actor hints at the unhappy underside of his cheerful character. Waterston, faced with Prosky's effervescent performance and with the fact that the Russian gets most of the funny lines, asserts his presence on stage by allowing both his body and his voice to harden into a professional propriety that is never far from querulousness. The contrast in the two performances echoes a surface contrast between the characters which their shared concern belies. The actors go beneath that surface by playing physical and vocal variations on their central reading of the character—Waterston's surprising moments of relaxation, Prosky's sudden shifts to an abrupt and businesslike voice. Two interesting characters, impressively played—that is the note of hope in *A Walk in the Woods*.

GERALD WEALES

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Mad bulls & sweet intoxication

LEVINE & CO.
WALL STREET'S INSIDER TRADING SCANDAL
Douglas Frantz
Henry Holt, $19.95, 370 pp.

THE TAKEOVER GAME
John Brooks
Dutton, $19.95, 380 pp.

Eliot Janeway

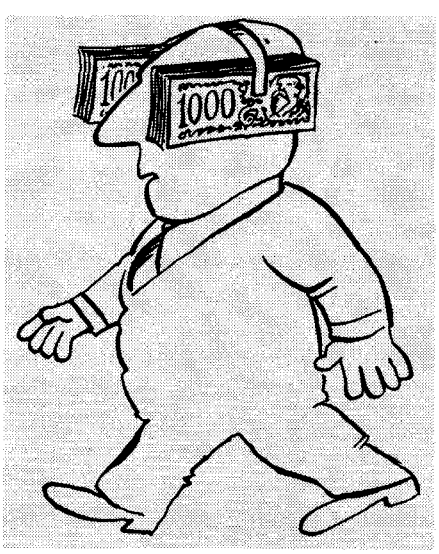
A funny thing happened to the country's bookshops on the eve of the selling panic that hit Wall Street last October. They were hit by a buying panic. The title, *The Great Depression of 1990,* explained its meteoric rise to the top of the best-seller list. I plead guilty to having helped start it with my review of Batra's book in the Sunday *New York Times*, although I warned that the joy-riders did not have until 1990 to enjoy another fling.

The commotion over the Batra book distracted attention from more solid works offering better documented analyses of the speculative malaise. Serious readers have been the losers. Hindsight on the October crash leaves no doubt that the suspicious who anticipated it outwitted the pseudo-shrewd who followed Batra's timetable.

Solid as it is, *Levine & Co.* outdoes vintage LeCarré as a thriller. No mere yarn-spinner could have contrived its wild plot, proving once again that the truth is stranger than fiction. Only a crack investigative reporter could have followed this jungle trail from Wall Street to Nassau, over to Zurich, and back to Washington. Douglas Frantz, now with the *Los Angeles Times*, has turned a suspense story of white-collar crime into a morality play which, however, climaxes with a tricky upset showing how crime can be made to pay after all, provided it's big enough to be taken legally.

No phony romance here. Frantz bares a "facts only" record. The marriages that can't be kept out of the tale are tawdry, while its villains display meanness that makes them inescapably self-destructive. The spice is provided by lawyers psyching themselves, and by bankers in on the action, who act like bookies on the make. The plot is held together, and justice served, by good guys on the job down the line at the SEC, trying hard and hitting pay dirt.

Ivan Boesky is now a great American legend. Dennis Levine fingered him. They deserved each other. A common interest bound them together. Boesky was welshing on $5 million of kickbacks he owed Levine for illegal tips on takeovers. When Levine complained, the formula they found for making the pay-off above board was to become partners. Once they shook hands on their deal, Boesky was set up for Levine to turn him in to the Feds when they closed in on him. So Levine has earned a place in the annals as the squealer who triggered a preview of the crash a year before it struck Wall Street with the revelation that our new era of money-closing in the stock market was just big talk covering up for a big fix. The late, great bull market was only as solid as the takeover game that ran it. One of Levine's stooges summed it up when he wisecracked that you don't need to be a rocket scientist to make it in the investment banking business.



Boesky's personal story is as dull as Boesky himself. Levine's is that of a small-time Moriarty magnetized to his own Sherlock Holmes. His first rule before he hit the jackpot was to live within "his legitimate means" in order to avoid attracting attention. He made the source of his leaks do so too. Nevertheless, he let his easy money cast him as a character in *Wall Street*. He bought a $95,000 Ferrari Tertarossa for one-third down. He easily could have paid cash, but was too greedy to divert all of it from his illicit operation. Boesky preached that "greed is healthy." Levine proved that it can be lethal.

Levine exploited his position with investment firms to make connections with law firms and get advance tips on takeover deals. In six years, he parlayed $125,000 into a net profit of $12.6 million, not counting what Boesky owed him for leads. It would have been even more if the Bahamas branch of the dumb and dreary old Swiss private bank he used had not nicked him for $10 charges on each of the collect calls he made from New York phone booths to place his orders. He complained about the chiseling, yet tied the Swiss shoe clerks in charge of the branch into his racket.

With greed goes fear. Insecurity expressed as flamboyance prompted

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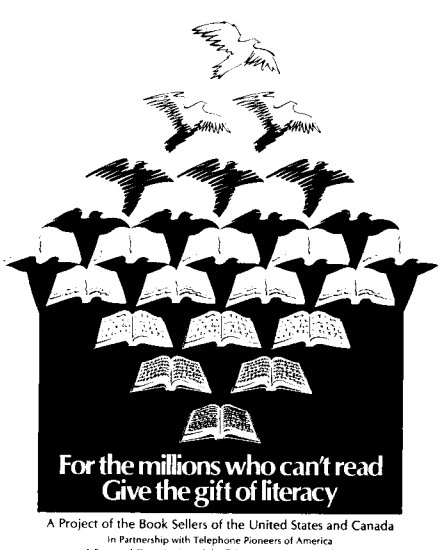
Levine to ignore the Bahamian laws that would have protected him after he violated the American laws that jeopardized him. At the top of Levine's high, after the alarm had been sounded, he provided a bizarre LeCarfe touch of his own by representing his firm on an advisory committee counseling the chairman of the SEC on insider trading! When the volume of his trades grew large enough to attract the attention of the watchdogs at the SEC, they queried Levine's accomplices at the bank. The obvious defense of his sidekicks was to hide behind the rigorous local bank secrecy laws, designed to attract customers such as Levine. Instead, they consulted Levine, who told them to lie, but also to hire a former general counsel of the SEC to fix the investigation. They did exactly what Levine told them to do; and the lawyer he told them to hire did exactly what Levine said he would do. He fixed the case, but for the bank that turned Levine in, not for Levine.

The former SEC general counsel also represented Boesky. When Levine handed Boesky over, this same lawyer made the deal that established Boesky as a celebrity, but revealed that, though bigger than Levine, he was small potatoes too. The SEC then professed policy concern lest forced sales of Boesky's $2 billion portfolio — petty cash! — would break the market a year before its spectacular boom and bust. This rationale allowed the SEC to leave Boesky better off than it did Levine after it took his car.



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But the SEC had a bigger reason for giving Boesky a sweeter deal, and he did make a bigger show of penitence. By contrast, Levine, in his finest hour leaving the courthouse, was anxious to make sure his picture was on the cover of *Newsweek*.

John Brooks, an experienced financial writer, is a serious student of financial sociology, a subject which covers a multitude of sins. His profile of the complexities of the takeover game, however, turns on the thesis that Wall Street's once staid and exclusive banking establishment found that productive corporate underwriting had grown unprofitable and, therefore, followed the money trail into the trading game, where the pickings were rich and easy. Brooks is precise in documenting his account of their transactions. Every detail that he itemizes is true.

There's no doubt that the "name" firms sold their prestige for stupendous fees, to front for raids that weakened the country's corporate structure, just when mismanagement was contributing to the adverse shift in marketplace fundamentals now apparent to any harassed condo debtor. There's no doubt either that, as Brooks shows, the highest-class "name" firms covered for a massive substitution of unsecured debt for accumulated equity; that the banks have been left holding the bag for the borrowings; and that shaky Savings & Loans and needy geriatrics have been stuck with junk bonds (well named, if not well covered) on the eve of a shrinkage in income needed to pay high interest rates. And there's no doubt that the operators and the firms they hired split lots of loot.

But there's considerably more to the tragedy than Brooks's simplistic effort at a rationale reaches. As the trading game flared up into the takeover game, it turned out to be trickier and costlier than anticipated, until one after another of the elite names recognized that the stakes were too immense for mere partnerships to handle. Hence the parade of sellouts by inner circle firms, and the staggering losses they inflicted on their new owners, some corporate, others just stockholders. The power their founding fathers wielded proved too overwhelming for the present generation to conserve. Like the aristocrats of an outgrown society, they chased the money everyone in the game was minting. Money was a trade-off for distinctive power. Brooks focuses on the money the firms started out making. He does not emphasize the leadership they lost along with the capital they dissipated. Nor does he rate them shortsighted for congratulating themselves on having beaten the game for which they shilled.

With the takeover game, moreover, has come an entire switch in prevailing attitudes towards the country's financial markets: from bona fide investment media, where money can work to produce income and accrue appreciation, to a lottery worth playing only to hit the next number the operators make lucky — on someone else's money. Even our Japanese mentors, no quick learners, have caught on to the big open secret that the trading mood and the takeover game have injected our investment markets with the financial equivalent of AIDS. The consequences for the country's pension funds and endowed institutions are alarming to contemplate — especially because so many of them have been in the game up to their necks.

Brooks is severe in his indictment of this orgy of speculative irresponsibility. He is explicit in warning of a repeat performance of excesses perpetrated on smaller markets in the days when responsible regulation was an issue, let alone an assumed assurance. But he is content to suspend judgment on his own body of evidence pointing to the debacle October brought. Moreover, he ignores the official approval of 6-percent margins on financial futures subject to unlimited liability: already responsible for tragedies galore to amateur Baruchs. Instead, he offers assurance that a responsible regulatory regime protects us against margin laxity that invites a repeat performance of the 1929 disaster.

But every post-mortem on the October crash has confirmed the hard evidence that this margin laxity did just that. More than incidentally, all the talk of a new 1929 ignores the specter of another 1933, which brought demand for reform beginning with the regulation of Wall Street. FDR keynoted the crackdown with his

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promise to "drive the money-changers out of the temple." Their responsibility for the collapse excluded them from participation in that stern regulatory phase of the New Deal. Wall Street's history of irresponsibility is repeating itself. Because Brooks leaves the outcome of the takeover game up in the air, he does not consider the clean-up game fated to follow.

But he does rebuke the 1985 Economic Report of the president for putting the White House seal of approval on the market racket and its antics "as not proper subjects for Federal regulation." In a shrewd footnote, he performs another scholarly public service by needling the academics and their Wall Street clients for mouthing platitudes about market efficiency while cleaning up on opportunities created by market inefficiency. The takeover game, by definition, exploits these opportunities. The documentation in *The Takeover Game* is a sober reminder that books are to be valued for the usable history they collect, more than for the timely judgments they offer. □

DEEP MAGIC NEVER DIES

THE OLD ENEMY

SATAN AND THE COMBAT MYTH

Neil Forsyth

Princeton, $67.50, 506 pp.

Jeffrey Burton Russell

The Old Enemy is a book on the development of the literary, mythological, legendary, and folkloric perceptions of the Devil from about 2000 B.C. to St. Augustine.

The most wonderful thing about this splendid book is its clarity. Readers have reason to be standoffish about many allegedly brilliant works recently appearing in the humanities, for a number of contemporary humanists forget the lesson we teach our undergraduates every week: if you express it clearly, it indicates that you are probably understanding it. Mr. Forsyth has obviously never forgotten this maxim. He shows a rare and precious charity to his audience: he wants to communicate more than to impress us with his brilliance.

The book really *is* one of the dozen most genuinely brilliant and original works I've encountered in the past few years: it is subtle, dense, learned, and analytical—always without sacrificing its clarity.

One must have something to grumble about, and in a few places trendy words and phrases appear that set one's teeth on edge; the first section of the book ought to have been trimmed to leaner size. Materials seem sometimes out of order: one example is that a number of important comments on sexuality—e.g. the Devil's alleged intercourse with Eve—appear in chapters other than the one on anti-feminism. Having wrestled with similar problems myself, I cannot blame the author for such difficulties, for the "story line" of the development of the concept of the Devil is so complex that any serious author dealing with the question is forced to choose (as a famous historian once said) between chaos and lies. That is, one may tell the whole story in such enormous complexity that readers will be unable to grasp it (chaos), or one may be clear through oversimplification (lies). Perhaps the closest we get to truth is in the balance between the two, and Forsyth seems as close to the fulcrum as one can get.

For those interested in "methodology," Forsyth draws upon Propp, Lévi-Straus, and the structuralist tradition as well as Freudian psychology, but he never follows them narrowly, using them rather to construct a method in large part his own. Forsyth is not a theologian, and he does not investigate the truth of the Satan concept so much as the literary and mythological structure of the figures surrounding Satan, such as the serpent, the tyrant, the rebel, the sexual outlaw, the dragon, chaos, and so on. He considers both myths and legends, which claim truth, and folklore, which does not. Legend is set in "history," as with Moses or Jesus, while myth is set *in illo tempore*, in another dimension. When Satan enters Hebrew-Christian narrative, Forsyth argues, he transforms legend into myth. My chief reservation about method is the sin of omission that the author commits in not drawing much more upon the rich Jungian tradition of treating such materials; he misses many a good bet.

The crux of the Satan story for the author is that it is the nexus of a combat myth whose origins stretch back to the ancient Near East. What came eventually to be (with Augustine) the standard Christian interpretation draws deeply from ancient mythological roots.

The book is much richer than I can indicate in a few pages, and the best I can do is to follow the author's organization and draw attention to some of his most

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important points.

Part One, "Ancient Enemies," examines combat myths in the Ancient Near East (including Canaan) and Greece. Chapter four, "Combat at the Red Sea," examines the Exodus story in the light of earlier literature and shows that the Red Sea is another manifestation of chaos, "the deep waters," and Tiamat. The sea (chaos) is the primordial enemy of God.

Part Two, "Rebellion and Apocalypse," treats the Old Testamentand, in superlative, unequaled fashion, Intertestamental materials. Some challenging perceptions along the way: After the exile, when the Zadokite priesthood largely replaced the Levites, it emphasized the temple as the center of worship and connected it closely to the monarchy. The Zadokites then made Satan a cosmic projection onto opposing political forces. The Devil developed in the Old Testament and even Apocalyptic thought without much (if any) influence from Iranian dualism: an absolutely correct point, I believe. Forsyth links the rebel of Isaiah 14 with the Greek Phaethon myth and the Ugaritic myth of Athtar. Though Isaiah explicitly says that the fall of the "son of the morning" refers to the "king of Babylon," Forsyth points out that the mythic content overwhelms and overflows the historical reference. The rebel to be cast down here is something deeper and more powerful than an earthly king, though the "king of Babylon," enemy of God's chosen people, is necessarily the enemy of God as well. Forsyth analyzes the well-known close connection between Isaiah 14 and Ezechiel 28 in the same manner: Ezechiel's "prince of Tyre" reverberates to the rebel/dragon motif of the gentile Tiamat, Mot, and Prometheus.

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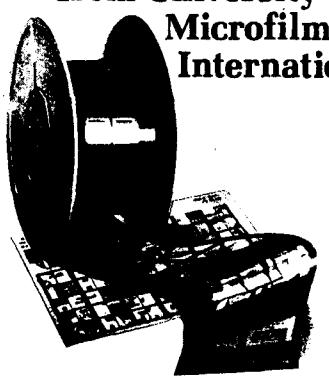

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Chapters 7-11 (in Part Two), which deal largely with Jewish Apocalyptic literature, are the most brilliant of the book. Part of the credit is due to the Intertestamental writers themselves as well as Forsyth, for they were the first to try to construct a coherent myth about the origin of evil in the world. Forsyth's originality here is to treat the question more as a *narrative* than a *theological* issue. In telling the story of the world, one must account for how evil corrupted God's creation. The roots of such narrative are already firmly imbedded in the Old Testament, of course, where the story line of sacred history is precisely the repeated rebellion of humanity, first directly against God (Adam and Eve; Cain; Noah), and then against God through rebellion against the Covenant.

Chapter eight discusses the addition of lust to motives for the fall through Apocalyptic interpretation of the "Watcher Angels" of Genesis 6. In the complex Enoch tradition, sexual lust becomes the transgression that brings evil into the world; further, the Enoch materials attribute the introduction of lust not to humanity itself but to evil angels. Chapter nine shows how the Apocalyptic *Book of Jubilees* ties Satan to the lustful angels, thus beginning the tradition that it is he who is the origin of sin through lust. Chapter eleven is anachronistic in its concern with "anti-feminism," but Forsyth does make the important point that the suspicion of sexuality that has always run as an undercurrent in Christianity derives from this Intertestamental Apocalyptic literature. Later the Gnostics would go further by claiming that the Devil had sexual intercourse with Eve and was the physical father of Cain and Abel.

Chapter ten deals with the Qumran dichotomy of light/good against darkness/evil. In the Intertestamental material, an ultimate question begins to be clear: to what extent did emerging dualism shift the myth from a struggle of humanity against an evil permitted by God (as in Job) to a struggle of God himself against that evil? Here and in Part Three, which deals superbly with the Gnostics, one senses with a desperate effort on the part of the conscious minds of these writers to deal with chaotic feelings/images/powers—perhaps best seen in terms of Jungian archetypes—a chaos too great, in other words, for any myth or any theology to bear.

Within Part Three, chapters 13-16 deal with the early Christian development of the myth. For Paul, Satan, "the stumbling block," was the center of opposition to preaching the Good News, and here the idea that Satan was not only the opponent of God and of Christ but also of the Christian community first emerges. Forsyth reveals, by the way, that Paul's curious connection of Satan with "the angel of light" derives from the Qumran *Damascus Document*.

As Forsyth, not (I think) himself a practicing believer, deals with the role of the Devil and demons in the Gospels, he raises a crucial contemporary theological problem. It is absolutely clear that the Gospel writers set the struggle of Jesus against the demons and the Devil as one of the central themes of their work, and clear too (as Forsyth shows later), that the Fathers and Christian tradition were unanimous in agreeing with this. Dissent from this consensus first became significant in the eighteenth century, but not till the twentieth (certainly among Catholics) did it

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become broadly influential.

The Devil has become embarrassing to many modern theologians caught up in secularist patterns of thought, but any nonbeliever or clear-thinking believer will want to consult two millennia of Christian tradition including the New Testament with more interest than the latest critical and theological theories of contemporary academics. Like it or not, belief in the conflict between Christ and Satan is an integral part of Christianity that can be removed only by ruthlessly tearing apart the fabric. If some modern academics are correct, and Christianity has been dead wrong on a central issue from its very inception, why bother with Christianity at all? One must take Christianity or leave it, and not shoehorn it into the latest theories from Paris or the Black Forest.

Part Four deals with the early Fathers and the heretics, showing how Tertullian, Irenaeus, and others identified Satan with Judas as the archetypal betrayer of the Lord and saw Satan as the cause of the heresy and the leader of heretics. For Irenaeus in his war against the Gnostics, Satan is the arch-apostate, the arch-heretic, and the first Gnostic. In one of his most brilliant intuitions, Forsyth shows how this view connected with Irenaeus's well-known "ransom theory" of soteriology—a view that launched a debate still alive after nearly two millennia.

Chapter 21 develops the view that H.A. Kelly first stated clearly and I have followed—namely that Origen was the most original demonologist among the Fathers and that it was he (along with Tertullian) who firmly linked the rebel princes of Isaiah 14 and Ezechiel 28 with Satan himself. Forsyth points out the bitter irony that the theologian who did the most to create Christian diabology was condemned as a heretic for the implications of his "apocatastasis," his view that everything will be drawn back to God at the eschaton (including Satan).

Part Five is devoted primarily to the greatest of all Christian diabologists, Augustine himself. It is Augustine who undeniably establishes what became the standard view of the Devil in Christendom (especially the West). With Augustine the storyline is rationalized, drawn out of myth into history: God created a great angel with freedom; that angel abused his freedom and sinned, thus introducing evil into the world; by tempting Adam and Eve he encouraged (he could not *cause*) the original sin of humanity. The Devil is the enemy of Adam and his progeny, and the enemy of the Second Adam (Christ) and Christ's progeny, the Christian community.

Forsyth summarizes the center of Augustine's ethic as "sin is the love of one's own excellence, or pride." But here, placing this view in the philosophical context of Neoplatonism, Forsyth misses the deeper meaning— the Deep Magic, as C.S. Lewis put it. The deep magic is that—as Paul, Augustine, Luther, and so many others have seen through two millennia—it is Jesus Christ who works whatever good there may be in us; our own part is merely to assent. Whatever talents we have are given (or *lent:* remember the parable!) to us; they are not our creation or in our possession. Finally, though it is good to think about the power of evil historically, theologically, mythologically, and literarily, it is much better to *act* in the power of good.

THE SOUTH RISES & FALLS

RICH IN LOVE

Josephine Humphreys

Viking, $16.95, 261 pp.

A SOUTHERN FAMILY

Gail Godwin

Morrow, $18.95, 540 pp.

Suzanne Rowen

Two southern women writers—Humphreys with her second novel and Godwin with her seventh—offer very different perspectives on the plight of the southern family. Faithful to southern literary tradition, these writers study the impact of time, place, and family in the shaping of individual souls, focusing on the struggle of the individual to shape his/her own identity and destiny in the face of very powerful historical, contextual, and familial ties and pressures. But Humphreys's family grows, making you believe that the South is indeed the new South, the South that has risen again; Godwin's family muddles, drowning the reader in the resistance of the old South, the South that was better left right where it was.

In both novels, routine family existence is shattered by an unexpected family tragedy that holds up a mirror to the realities underlying otherwise "perfect" family dynamics. That event offers individual members a choice: to stretch themselves and emerge as independent adults or to succumb again to the temptations of the very familial interaction that "has kept them down."

Humphreys's story, set in South Carolina, is narrated by a precocious, witty, and utterly charming seventeen-year-old, Lucille Odom, whose course of adolescent development is abruptly accelerated by the chaos caused by her mother Helen's disappearance. Lucille discovers a matter-of-fact note written by Helen stating that she plans to begin a new life and is leaving husband Warren, a businessman who has done well for himself but has not been exciting enough for adventuresome Helen. Lucille immediately takes charge, softening the news in a revised letter, calling her older sister Rae back from Washington, and diverting a "frozen" Warren with TVs, exercycles, and computer games. If the weight of this fiasco is not enough, sister Rae returns home pregnant, with husband Bill (whom she has just married on the ride down), and ready to move in for the summer.

Thus begins a series of family regroupings — in which Lucille assumes the role

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of head-of-the-household while she observes (in exasperation) family members reshuffling into place and embarking on their own "growing pains" journey: Dad finds a new companion in hairstylist Vera, Rae struggles with the loss of freedom in marriage and pregnancy, and Bill tries to "truly win" his new wife for the first time.

Lucille's fundamentally "good" character, reflected in the clever observations she makes about life around her, constitutes the heart of the novel. You feel charmed, vulnerable, and eager for her to stretch her wings and take off.

Of course, Lucille manages to fly, in the form of her first feelings of love. But Lucille's silent affections are not directed at her appealing boyfriend, Wayne, but at her brother-in-law, Bill. We are moved along in this reverie until a second family crisis — Rae's violent labor and delivery — regroups the family yet again. Helen, who has been hiding out nearby, comes home; Rae recovers, and decides she'll keep Bill; and Lucille, who has openly confessed her love, emerges from rejection, a matured, self-aware woman poised for greater heights.

> *I knew what love was without the aid of empirical evidence, and furthermore, I believed that I did have it. It was in me. It had been accumulating silently over the years like equity in a house.*
>
> — *Josephine Humphreys*
> Rich in Love

Set in North Carolina, Godwin also devises a family tragedy to interrupt the natural flow of daily family life — this time, a matriarchal, genteel southern family, the Quicks. Clare, a forty-two-year-old New York writer who "escaped her southern upbringing," returns home to celebrate her mother Lily's birthday. All of the family dynamics are drawn in this oppressive family gathering: Lily, a spirited woman, whose life has disintegrated because she has married beneath her, and is now reduced to bitter southern affectations; Lily's second husband, Ralph Quick, an ineffective, lonely putterer, who is ill-equipped to handle the likes of Lily; Clare's half-brothers: Theo, a twenty-eight-year-old under-achiever whose distinction stems from his defiance of family expectations, having married a hillbilly, Snow Mullins, and fathered a son, Jason, before the two separated; and twenty-six-year-old Rafe, good-looking and self-destructive.

Clare's homecoming is interrupted by the untimely and mysterious death of Theo and his new girlfriend — a conjectured murder-suicide. The tragedy unleashes a series of narrator accounts of individuals grappling with Theo's death: each tries to reconcile this event with his/her own personal history, overcome perceived family betrayals, and determine his/her own purpose in life outside family walls.

Like Humphreys's novel, Godwin's is a study in observation: narrators witness, reflect, and articulate thoughts and feelings about what they discover while they watch the family forced to change by circumstance. From there, however, the novels part company.

Granted, Humphreys's characters are more appealing: we're bound to prefer lively, idiosyncratic characters whose generous natures give us faith that they will overcome adverse circumstance. Godwin's characters, in contrast, are self-conscious, narcissistic babblers whose feeble attempts at action are constantly undermined by self-pity. Indeed, Lucille's initiation story is powerful because we are drawn into the subjectivity of her perspective — we are as shocked as Lucille is by Bill's rejection — and are forced to go back and rethink her perspective on her family's own individual journeys. We're never seduced by Godwin's characters or their rhetoric, and thus caught unawares when subjective accounts of events are contradicted by the perspectives of others.

But it's more than a case of likable characters and seductive narrative; technically the novels cannot compete. Humphreys has crafted a very tight novel: every character has a purpose; every observation folds into a later discovery; every action intentionally shapes the outcome of characters. Godwin, in contrast, has written a sprawling series of rambling journals in which a bloated cast of secondary characters (conveniently representing every geographic, ethnic, and racial heritage) comes and goes and whose purpose appears strictly conventional: they allow family members to speak. Interior monologues (especially Clare's) go on forever, and go nowhere. What action does take place over the course of the year in the novel is dwarfed by episodic digressions that are picked up and dropped. In her effort to be comprehensive, Godwin also crams in commentary on religion, social class, race — even the role of the artist — which she can't possibly do justice to in any meaningful way. We simply get lost in the bulk of it all — but worse, we get bored and resent it — all 540 pages of it.

It is, in fact, when both novelists launch into indigenous social critique that the novels fall short. One has the sense that these writers feel compelled to make their personal statements known through the racial presence in their characters' lives. The attempts feel contrived and don't work.

One also wonders if any strong men exist in the South. Both novelists pit uniformly-spirited women against ineffective, overly-sensitive men who are dependent on mother figures to come through for them when their own women don't deliver.

In the end, what does this say about

REVIEWERS

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MICHAEL GALLAGHER *is the author of* The Laws of Heaven *(Weiden & Nicolson), a book on American Catholic resistance to immoral public policy.*

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family? Family endures. Humphreys's Lucille concludes "Our family is not what it was, but we are all gravitating back into family lives of one sort and another; it is a drift that people cannot seem to help, in spite of lessons learned the hard way . . . 'Family' meant people in a house together. But that was in a language so far back that all its words are gone, a language we can only imagine."

Godwin's Felix remarks to lover Clare, "It's like being inside a drama in which good influences and bad influences are being played out through the family members. . . . I'm never able to put my finger on who starts the trouble. And as an old theater person, I have to tell you it's not boring. And that's a value for both of us, isn't it?" I'll bank on Humphreys any day. □

SIMON PETER REMEMBERS

UPON THIS ROCK
THE LIFE OF ST. PETER
Walter F. Murphy
Macmillan, $19.95, 538 pp.

Michael Gallagher

In Flannery O'Connor's short story " A Good Man is Hard to Find," a psychopath called The Misfit wipes out an entire family. Before he quite finishes the job, however, he gets into a theological discussion with the sole surviving member, the grandmother: Did Jesus raise the dead or didn't he? The Misfit is too canny to come flat out and say Jesus did or Jesus didn't because he wasn't there. But he wished he had been there because then he'd know — and knowing would make all the difference in the world.

Would it though? Walter F. Murphy seems to say no in this life of St. Peter. For Murphy's Simon Peter is not a man who lives by what he knows. Despite having "been there," he knows much less about the Master than the Fathers of Nicea and Chalcedon would later claim to. And, of course, pitted against any member of the Roman curia today, Peter would be a colossal ignoramus when it came to christology. What fueled his burning faith — and Murphy contends that Peter needed faith just as much as do we — was not knowledge but love. Passionate love was the making of Peter, and, in this powerful re-creation of first-century Christianity, it was also the unmaking of him on more than one occasion.

Murphy bypasses the usual scenic stops. Those old favorites Judas and the centurion — one the darling of the revisionists, the other the champion of muscular Christians — don't rate even a walk-on. Gone also is that sex object nonpareil of biblical fiction, a genteelly voluptuous Mary Magdalene as reformed prostitute. Murphy's Magdalene is a wealthy landowner with an imperious will, a born leader whose courage and decision hold the followers of the Way together in the face of the panic that follows the crucifixion.

Murphy's narrator is Quintus, a wealthy young man of Greek and Roman parentage with an interest in philosophy and modest literary ambitions. Skeptic and dilettante of sorts though he was, Quintus first became a God Fearer — a gentile who reveres the God of Israel but remains uncircumcised. Then he became drawn to Jesus and his message of universal love, though at first he's much put off by the sweaty and quarrelsome Galilean peasants the Master unaccountably chose to surround himself with, one of whom is Simon Peter, whose friend and confidant he would eventually become.

Murphy, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton, has in his three novels shown a single-minded fascination for the papacy. His critically acclaimed 1979 best seller *Vicar of Christ* was the story of the first American pope, a Marine hero and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who dies from an assassin's bullet because of his stern condemnation of nuclear weapons. The less successful *Roman Enigma*, though its form was that of an espionage thriller, was in fact a searing "J'Accuse" directed at Pius XII for his failure to speak out even when the Germans were rounding up Jews within sight of his balcony. And in one of his short pieces of fiction, Murphy imagined what would have happened if Peter instead of Pius XII had been pope during the Holocaust.

Nor is *Upon This Rock* without its polemical nuances. For Murphy doesn't hesitate to draw conclusions when he grapples with the controversy over Judaization that nearly tore apart the early church, or again, the scandal and dismay caused by the delayed return of the Master that hung over it like a dark cloud. Above all, Murphy's characters agonize over who the Master was or — point crucial beyond measure — is.

Not as central to the novel as faith itself but still important are two other aspects of Murphy's re-creation of those

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first days — interpretations that have pointed significance for our own day. His Mary Magdalene leads the eucharistic liturgy, and no one thinks of demurring. And — a strong echo of the closing movement of *Vicar of Christ* — Jesus' fate is sealed when he tells Pilate that he preaches love of enemies. The shrewd Roman realizes that a doctrine so radical is a far greater threat to Caesar than any Zealot horde.

Despite a tendency to rely too much on conversations, Murphy's *Upon this Rock* is immensely entertaining. It has a strong narrative drive. It brings to life a first-century world that is compellingly real. And it gives us full-bodied, fully human characters: a Stephen whose abrasiveness had much to do with his being the first to win a martyr's crown, a Paul whose nuanced humility could be as trying as his stridency, and, most important, a Simon Peter with whom we can empathize — a man of heroic strength and glaring weakness, who slowly came to realize that the Master had been well aware of both when he chose him as his Rock. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 162)

weapons by our government and still call ourselves Christians.

SISTER MARION CRONK

Spindled & mutilated

Richmond, Ind.

To the Editors: The editors mention a visit from a Polish Solidarity member who believes nuclear deterrence is a legitimate just-war position.

Like the Polish visitor, I am a scientist (Ph.D. in physics). Modern scientific technology has made "military strength" an illusion. We cannot protect human and civil rights by weapons that destroy everything they are meant to protect. American scientists in the Manhattan project thought they were working for "deterrence." But hundreds of thousands of innocent people discovered otherwise.

The just-war theory has been bent, spindled, and mutilated to serve a U.S. foreign policy identical to Soviet policies. . . . Poland has been bounced back and forth between Germany and Russia for at least half its thousand- year history. The Poles' hatred of the oppressors is understandable. But others working for self-determination in Eastern Europe have remarked that the unbending antagonism the Poles display toward the Soviets hinders such efforts.

We must convince the bullies in the White House and the Kremlin that they cannot base their national security on domination of other nations. . . .

CATHY FLICK

Squaring contradictions

Portland, Maine

To the Editors: What is at all special about a visiting Pole putting his trust and hope for peace in American nuclear deterrence rather than in Gospel peace? Answer: The beleaguered Poles command our sympathy whereas, when an American speaks, all one can see is the obscene glut of nukes, an indulgence at the expense of the poor everywhere, on which the speaker stands. If the arms race is legitimate, it should not require Polish appreciation to make it so.

The argument that the peace pastoral is wise in approving just-war teaching and Gospel nonviolence and that the *National Catholic Reporter* is not in denying just-war theory and nuclear deterrence a hearing won't wash. The bishops' late accommodation of nuclear deterrence is inconsistent with just-war principles. And their accommodation of just-war theory and nonviolence is accomplished only by failure to recognize the sharp moral contradiction between them and by ignoring the implications of Gospel nonviolence after acknowledging that tradition. Where's the wisdom?

The *Commonweal* argument is facile and, in effect, self-serving. The bishops' letter was a blessing in reasserting the dominion of moral principles regarding arms. But its espousal of just-war theory cannot be squared with the radical nonviolence and trust in God of the first three hundred years of the Christian era.

WILLIAM H. SLAVICK

The editors reply:

Before World War II, this journal's editors were sharply divided about whether the totalitarian power of Nazi Germany, which *Commonweal* deeply deplored, should be opposed by measures that risked war. An editorial in March 1939, for example, declared that no act of Nazi aggression could justify a general war. Better a temporary triumph of Nazi ideas.

But by 1941 the editors had definitively abandoned this hope of resisting totalitarian evil by nonviolent means alone— and their successors have never gone back on that abandonment. It seemed then that the refusal to fight a war aimed at preventing Nazi domination of Europe and possibly the whole world was *not* the appropriate moral response. It seemed later that refusing to maintain any military counter to the Soviet Union, e.g., no NATO in Europe, no resistance in Korea, was also *not* the moral response. Finally, it seemed that even the process of nuclear disarmament had to be carried out in a careful and balanced way or the practical consequence could be to heighten the very possibility of mega-slaughter

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that revolted all sense of morality.

The same Christian convictions that led *Commonweal* to reject absolute pacifism and unilateral disarmament have also led it to reject many of the military and political policies of our government—from the saturation bombing of European cities to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from John Foster Dulles's "roll-back" to the war in Vietnam, from "more bang for a buck" to the MX. In trying to establish the moral limits to the use of force, and the rights and obligations of each conscience in this area, *Commonweal* has welcomed to its pages pacifists and unilateralists. Their contributions have been invaluable. They have joined with just-war adherents in opposing the claims of sheer *realpolitik*. They have challenged just-war adherents both to reexamine their principles and to apply them. *Commonweal*'s experience, in other words, supports what the bishops concluded in their pastoral—that the just-war and nonviolent traditions are complementary and corrective.

The editorial "Maintaining Perspective" did no more than suggest that the bishops' conclusion might be true for the *National Catholic Reporter* as well. If our own thinking on international politics and morality has been made more uncomfortable by the pacifist testimony, it has also, we think, been made better. Perhaps something like that would occur to the case for nonviolence stated by the *NCR*—or by several of our correspondents—if the just-war teaching and the case for nuclear deterrence, too, were not simply rendered unthinkable—and invisible—from the start.

It is easy to caricature just-war teachings and to burden them with all the sins of the past, while burdening pacifism with none. It is easy to dismiss with broad assertions the problem of nuclear deterrence while leaving unexamined what are the real alternatives.

Our editorial did not ask the *NCR* or other critics of deterrence or just-war teachings to change their positions. It only suggested that the tension created by at least *some* sympathetic attention to another viewpoint would be valuable. And if it is not sufficient that this alternative viewpoint was endorsed by the American bishops, then we thought it might be persuasive to note the case of our Polish visitor, a very well-informed, deeply Christian individual who has spent time in prison for participation in a nonviolent movement and who knows at first hand problems of the third world.

THE EDITORS

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Language of Community

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON, SHAMAI KANTER, MAX STACKHOUSE ON THE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNITY at the University of Guelph in Ontario, June 20-23, 1988: The Fifth Annual Consultation of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life. For information, write ARIL, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle 10801; tel. 914-632-8852.

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